SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORER

Autumn 1997 Number 49

Giant Plant of Peru
Undersea Treasure, Ecuador
Evita: Argentine Obsession
Jungle Expedition, Belize
Ecuador by Rail

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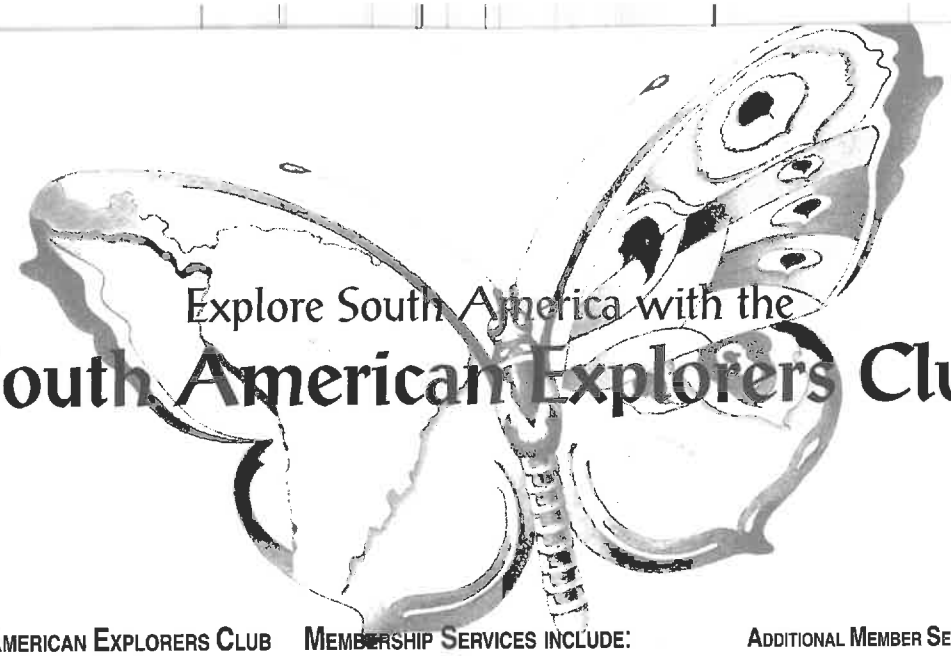

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- Support scientific field exploration and research in the social and natural sciences
- Promote field sports such as mountaineering, white water running, hiking, caving, biking and others.
- Awaken greater interest in and appreciation for wilderness conservation and wildlife protection.
- Receive contributions for projects aimed at conserving natural resources and improving social conditions in Latin America.

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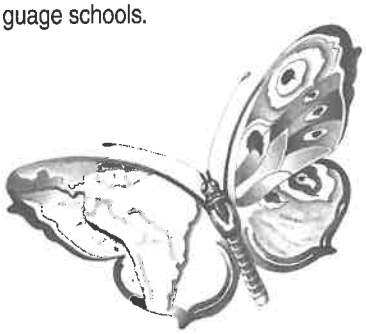

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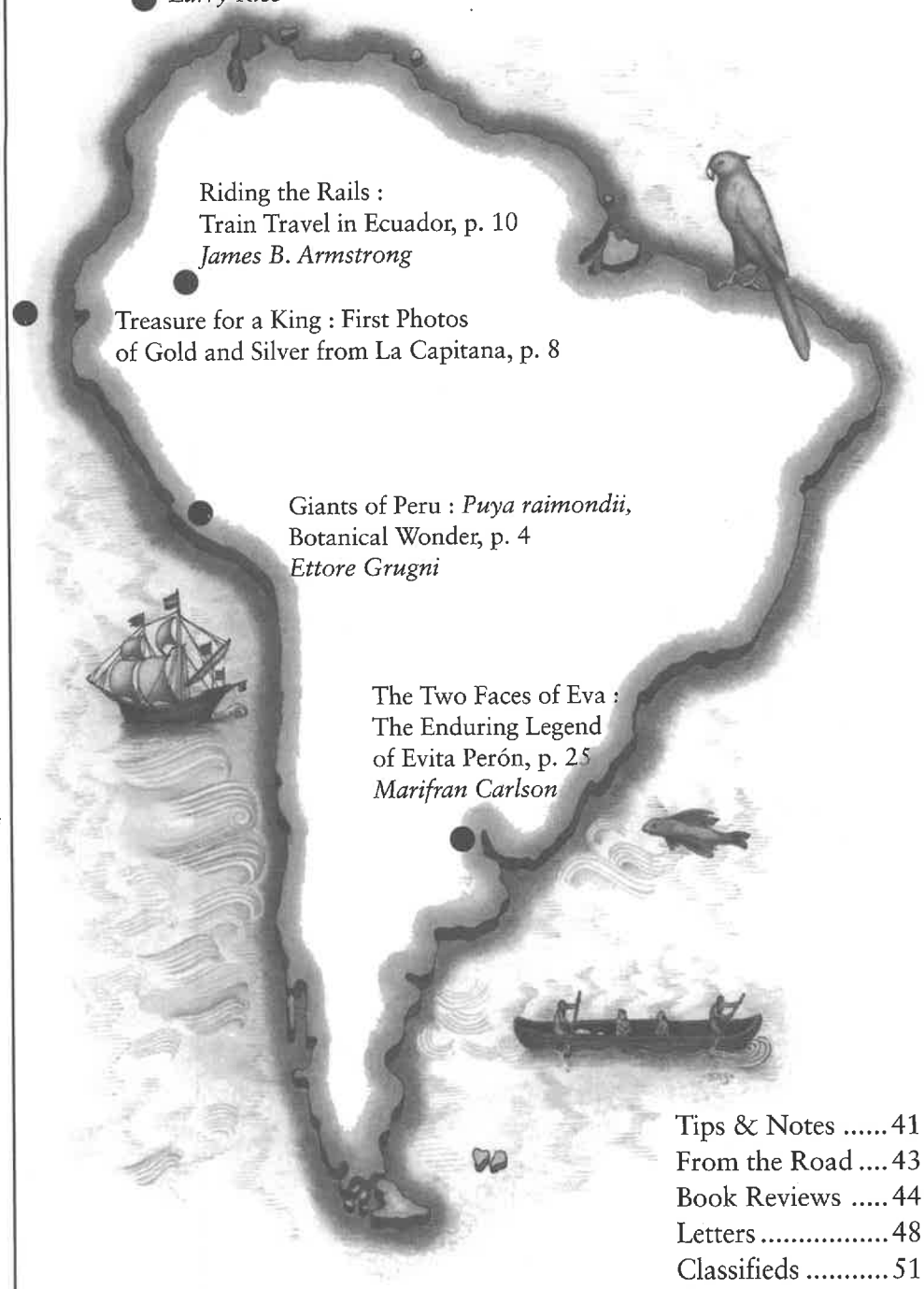

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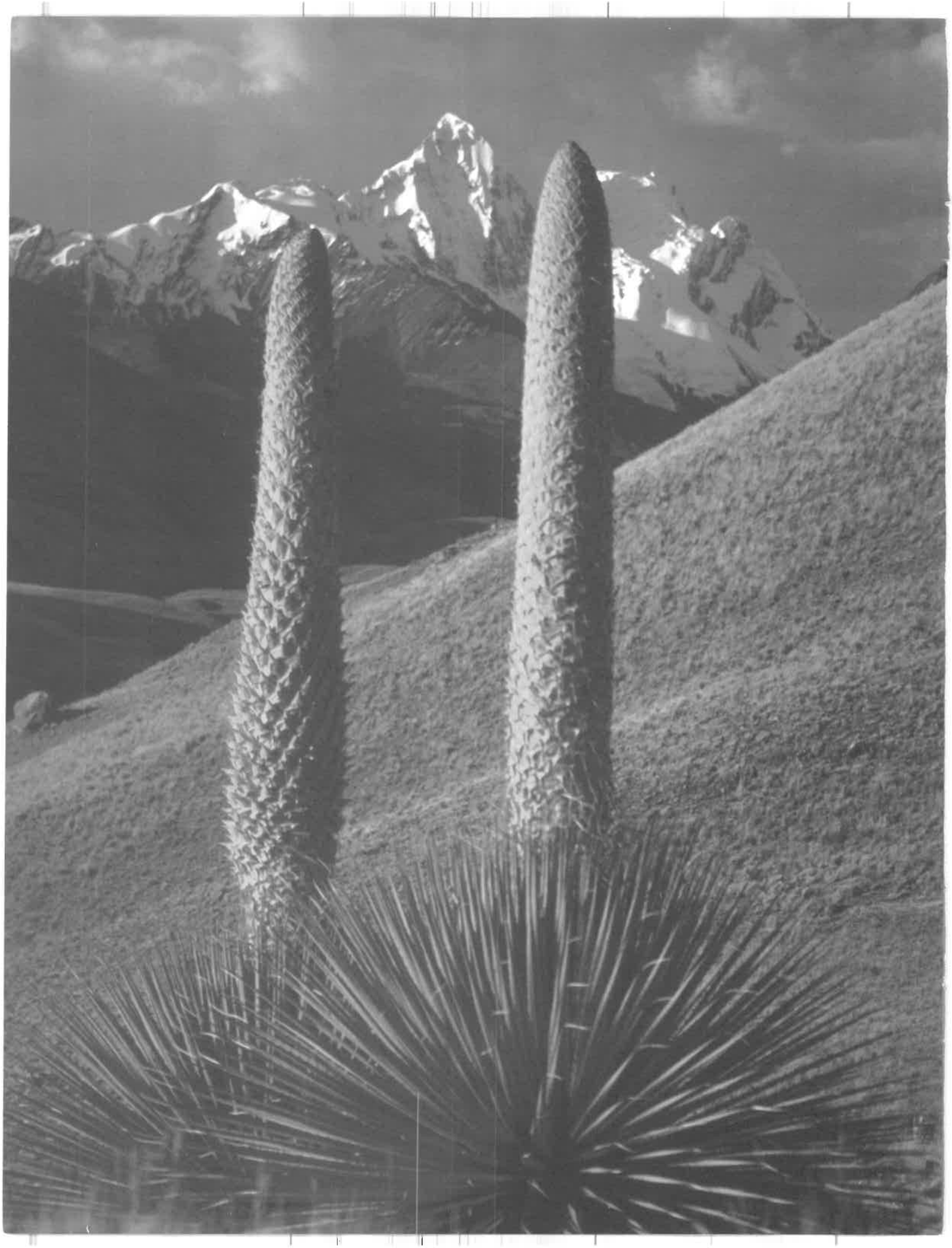

Giants of Peru

Puya raimondii: Botanical Wonder

by Ettore Grugni

Puya raimondii is a unique plant, thriving in the bleak grasslands of the Andes two and a half miles above sea level and reaching a height of thirty feet or more.

Because it grows in remote, high–altitude habitats inaccessible by good roads, relatively few travelers in South America have ever seen a *puya*. Frequently, it's necessary to travel by foot or horse to reach the sites.

Few travelers in South America have ever seen a *puya*.

Although the plants generally grow in isolated colonies with populations ranging from a few dozen to many thousands, single specimens do occur. As noted in *National Geographic* (October 1950), a solitary *puya* in Bolivia was found some 300 miles from the nearest existing colony.

The first time I saw a colony of *Puya raimondii* was in August 1992, in the Cordillera Blanca of the Departamento de Ancash, in Parque Nacional Huascarán. It was love at first sight. The plants were in bloom, and many hummingbirds flew around the thousands of tiny, white flowers.

Puyas are bromeliads, that is, members of *Bromeliaceae*, commonly known as the pineapple family. Many bromeliads are epiphytes, living "on air" in the tops of trees. Spanish moss is a good example of an epiphytic bromeliad. *Puyas*, however, like their cousin the cultivated pineapple, are terrestrial. The huge inflorescence, or blooming stalk, of the *puyas* is analogous to the pineapple—just much longer and taller.

Of all the known species of bromeliads, the *puya* is the largest. In fact, in the bleak grasslands of its habitat, about 4,000 to 4,200 m a.s.l., it is a veritable giant. No other plant in the puna even approaches its height. When viewed from a distance, a colony of flowering *puyas* looks somewhat like an army of giant candlesticks.

The *puyas* can live up to 100 years.

The trunk of the plant is surmounted by a dense rosette of bayonet–like leaves, growing outward in all directions to form a ball six feet or more in diameter, depending on the age of the plant. The fattish leaves are

Ettore Grugni is a geologist and naturalist from Pavia, Italy. He presently lives in Lima as a teacher in the Italian Foreign Ministry's educational service.

about four feet long. Tough and fibrous, they taper from a four–inch width near the base to a sharp point. Spaced two inches apart along the edges of the leaves are brown colored hooks about 3/8–inch pointing toward the center of the rosette. These barbs are needle–sharp.

Botanists estimate the approximate age of a mature plant by comparing the number of fresh leaves with the number of accumulated dead stubs on the trunk below. The *puyas* can live up to 100 years.

When a plant is about ten feet tall, it sends up a columnar bloom stalk from the center of the rosette. In three months, the column reaches its full height of 15 to 20 feet, thus giving the *puya* an overall height of about 30 feet.

As an inflorescence grows, stubby, densely packed branches begin to unfold and grow out of it. These eight– to ten–inch branches resemble the shape of unhusked ears of corn. They first appear near the base of the column when the stalk has reached about half its full height, then sprout at progressively higher levels as the stalk grows to maturity.

A single plant can produce six– or seven–million seeds.

One of these towering stalks in full bloom is an impressive floral arrangement. The branches are symmetrically arranged in closely packed spirals. In fact, the *puya* inflorescence is the largest in the world, with up to 8,000 flowers on one flowering stalk. Each of the hundreds of branches carries a ring of a half–dozen or more of the three–petaled blossoms. Thus, up to four– or five–thousand delicate flowers are on display high above the formidable defenses of the barbed rosette. The latter poses no problem to the hummingbirds frequently seen hovering about the column sometimes two or three at once.

The seed capsules cluster in compact egg–shaped groups of three, averaging about 20 groups per branch, with each capsule containing approximately 150 seeds. Since the number of branches on a bloom stalk can be six– or seven–hundred, a single plant can produce six– or seven–million seeds. Nevertheless, the chance of any one of these millions of seeds ever producing a mature plant is very small indeed.

An army of giant candlesticks.

Once *puya* has bloomed and produced its huge crop of seeds, it dies. Whether it dies naturally is of little importance, since the local population cut down most of the plants that have bloomed to use the stalks. Shepherds near *puya* territory use the stalks for rafters in small shelter huts. They cover the rafters with *ichu*, the bunch grass of the puna, to produce a comfortable little refuge. Also, those living in the higher villages near a *puya* colony often climb up considerable distances to secure the stalks. They are commonly used for roof beams, benches, and other purposes. Sometimes the stalks are used in the building of racks for drying meat.

When a visitor sees a *puya* colony for the first time, one peculiar thing is certain to catch his attention: Practically all the plant trunks seem to be coated with a layer of black charcoal. There is good reason for this—it *is* charcoal. As the plant grows, the rosette of fresh leaves at the top rises higher and higher above the ground. Meanwhile, the older leaves below die and collapse, forming a tinder–dry sheath draped about the truck. For this reason, *puyas* are highly combustible, and a grass fire will quickly ignite them. Grass fires are often set deliberately, presumably to improve grazing conditions.

All in all, very little is known about *Puya raimondii*. The details of its reproductive biology and whether it's holding its own against rather heavy odds are a mystery. Botanists tend to believe, however, that on the whole, it may be slowly losing the battle for survival. The young plants are few in number. They are exposed to considerable hazards over an extended period because of their slow growth rate. And more serious than the danger of grass fires may be of grazing sheep, although this danger varies from place to place.

The local inhabitants often burn the plants, sometimes purely for their amusement. Indeed, in the desolated Peruvian puna, nothing else for miles around makes such a crackling fire.

From stories handed down from generation to generation, it seems that there were once *rodales de puyas* (colonies of *puyas*) where now there are none. To endure, the *puyas* that survive today must be protected. Efforts should be made to set aside selected groups of these plants in preserves where they can be given adequate protection. There is still much to learn about *puyas*. Further study is warranted, and efforts should be made to catalog and conserve this incredible plant before it is too late. The *puya* is rare and remarkable enough to deserve no less.

Where to Find *Puyas*

The easiest way to see a group of *puyas* is on a trip to the Huascaran National Reserve in Huaraz. In Pachacoto, 20 km before Catac on the Lima–Huaraz road, take a truck directly to La Union. About 20 km along this road, you will see the first *puyas* on your right. May to December are the best months, as they are usually in full bloom then. The marvelous countryside of grass, rocks, and legumes is worth a visit anyway.

It's possible to spend the night at the Park Office, but you can also get permission to pitch your tent near the first group of *puyas*. If you're there during the blooming season, you'll be able to observe colorful hummingbirds hovering about the inflorescences. Many other species of birds build nests in holes on the "candlestick," and hawks circle overhead.

I have visited many of the most interesting *rodales de puyas* during the last five years. The most impressive is undoubtedly at Vischongo, near Vilcashuaman, in the Department of Ayacucho. Here, puyas are bigger and in larger groups than usual. To reach this site requires a seven–hour trip south of Ayacucho.

The *rodales* of Huarochiri, Huaros, Chiquian, and Bellavista, which I visited on many different occasions and in different seasons, are recommended as well.

Recently, a National Sanctuary for the protection of the *Puya raimondii* has been created in the National Reserve of Calipuy, near Trujillo, in the Department of La Libertad. This is an important step for the conservation of this valuable species.

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Antonio Raimondi

Anyone wandering round the elegant squares of Lima might be surprised to come across three statues, all dedicated to an Italian named Antonio Raimondi. He was greatly esteemed in Peru, but almost totally unknown in Italy, despite international recognition and awards for his work.

Raimondi's face appears not only on a Peruvian banknote—a privilege reserved for the fathers of the nation—but also on two commemorative medallions minted in his honor. A major Lima high school bears his name, and the museum housing his life's work has recently been restored and expanded.

Who, then, was Antonio Raimondi?

Born in Milan in 1824, Raimondi grew into a sensitive young man attracted to the study of natural history. He read extensively about the great travelers and explorers: the voyages of Captain Cook, the accounts by Bougainville and Dumont d'Urville, and most importantly, the discoveries made by Alexander von Humboldt. Early on, he aspired to follow in their footsteps.

After taking part in an uprising against Austrian troops, he left Italy and sailed to Peru in January 1850. Cayetano Heredia, an illustrious physician, professor, and researcher, immediately recognized the talent of the young Italian and put him to work classifying the University's mineralogical and petrographic collections. So began Raimondi's brilliant career.

In late 1851, Raimondi set forth on the first of his many travels in the Andes which held such fascination for him. He continued his travels, alternating university teaching and research with his explorations and widening his knowledge by working with local researchers. He was soon corresponding with many international scientific societies.

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Treasure for a King

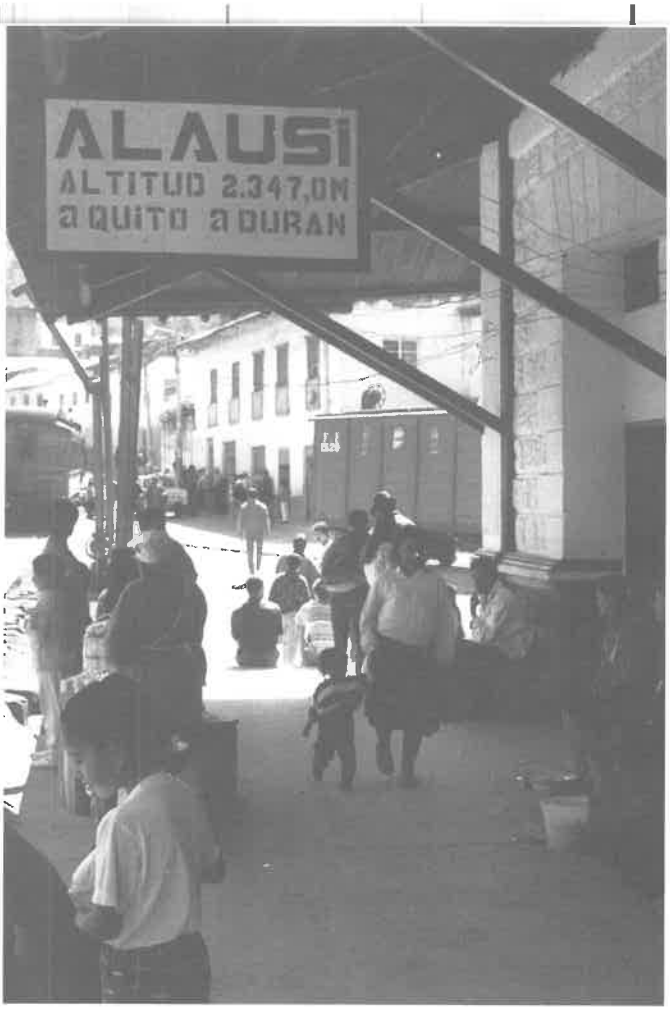
Gold and Silver from La Capitana: First Photos

Treasure hunters diving off Chanduy, Ecuador are bringing up loot from the fabulous cargo of the 1200–ton La Capitana Jesus Maria de la Limpia Concepcion, a Spanish galleon that sank a mile off the coast nearly 350 years ago. Built in Guyaquil to transport silver and gold, La Capitana went to the bottom with three years of accumulated taxes and coins minted exclusively for King Philip IV of Spain that, according to J. A. Ruth, conservator for the La Capitana expedition, could be worth ten– to twenty–thousand dollars a piece.

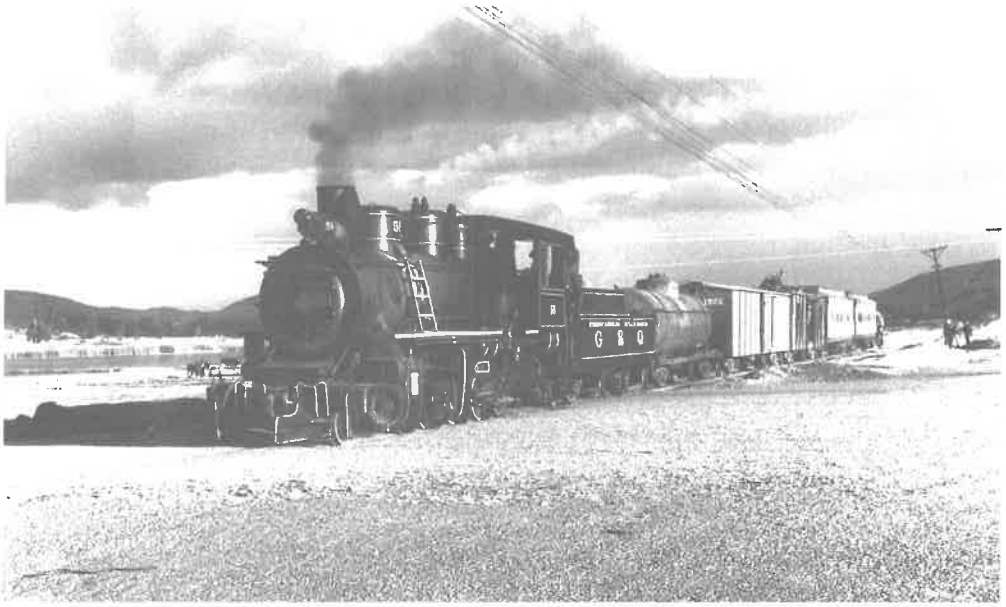
La Capitana left Callao, Peru on October 18, 1654 heavily overloaded with 600 passengers and cargo. Through navigational error, it sailed into the Bay of Guayaquil in low tide, hit a reef, and sank. Twenty people drowned; some, it is said, met their end while trying to swim with pockets full of silver.

See photos at left for some of the first shots ever of the fabulous riches of La Capitana. So far, divers have recovered more than 5,000 coins, dozens of bronze cannonballs unique to La Capitana, three 64–pound silver ingots, a golden crucifix, and more. The Capitana has enormous historical significance. Unfortunately, salvage operations have stopped amid disputes between rival salvage companies. Also, until agreement is reached with the Ecuadorian government on the share owed to the salvage companies, divers are in no hurry to resume operations.

More on the intrigue surrounding the salvage of La Capitana in future issues.



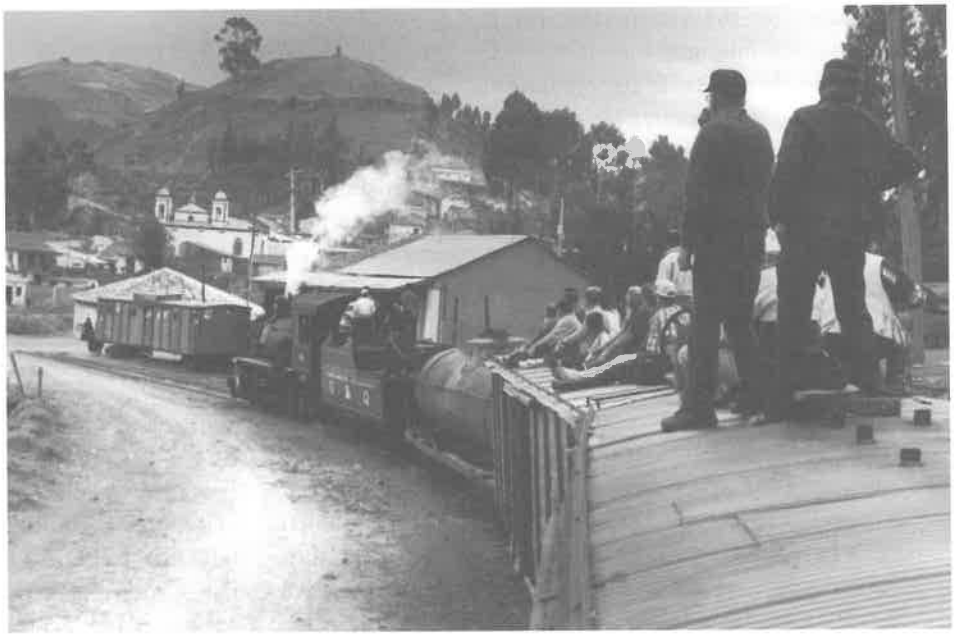
One of the great train journeys of the world



Riding the Rails

Train Travel in Ecuador

by James B. Armstrong



There, stretched out splendidly before us, almost as though they are being presented for our inspection and approval, are the sights we have traveled so far to see. In the distance looms the snow–covered crown of the volcano Chimborazo, brilliant in the morning sun. Beyond it, farther to the north, suspended against the deep blue sky, soars the craggy top of Carihuairazo. And in the foreground, cutting through the wide, dry valley, is a single railroad track.

For a moment, all is still. Then a shrill whistle pierces the silence, followed by the distinctive chuffing of a steam locomotive—at first, slow and deliberate, then more rapid and urgent. As we wait, the noise grows steadily louder. Suddenly, a train bursts into view. While cameras click and videorecorders whir, it charges past us, smoke billowing and whistle blaring.

It quickly comes to a stop a short way up the line, pauses briefly, then slowly chugs back down the track to where we stand. Clanking and creaking, it halts in front of us. Some in our party climb aboard the wooden coaches that bring up the rear. Others clamber into the so–called passenger car (in reality, nothing more than a boxcar with a large doorway cut in the side) coupled ahead of the coaches. Still others climb up the ladder and sit on the roof. A few walk forward and climb aboard the locomotive itself.

When we are all settled, there is another loud blast of the whistle. And then our little train takes off once more, resuming its deliberate, much–interrupted way up the main line of the Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos toward its eventual destination of Quito.

James Armstrong is a copyeditor of children's books. He has traveled by train in many parts of the world. He and his family live in New York City, where Will is now a seventh grader at the Salk School of Science.

The Resilient Railway

The trip between Guayaquil and Quito, Ecuador, is one of the great train journeys of the world. In the course of just 300 miles, the narrow–gauge railway offers almost everything an inveterate train traveler could want: a quick run across the coastal flatlands between Guayaquil and Bucay; the fascinating switchback that negotiates the *Nariz del Diablo*, or the Devil's Nose, near Alausí; a twisting climb up into the Andes; a leisurely jaunt along the famed Avenue of the Volcanoes between Riobamba and Quito; and, throughout, spectacular scenery and colorful towns and villages.

For many years, it has been difficult to make the trip in its entirety. Problems, both physical and financial, have routinely beset the Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos, Ecuador's

national railway system. During the annual rainy season, washouts and mudslides are common, and in the years when El Niño is active, the damage is frequently worse, with floods often severing large sections of the system. Not surprisingly, the railway has consistently lost money. In 1995, the national government, which had grown tired of expending large amounts on the antiquated, poorly maintained line, got out of the train business altogether. It cut off funding and turned the system over to the employees: "Here! *You* take it." At that point, many expected the railway to shut down for good. But, surprisingly, the employees have kept it operating—after a fashion.

These days, passenger service is sporadic, and only portions of the line are in service. However, charter trains sometimes run, and when they do, they offer visitors a chance to experience the entire operation in all its appealing, exasperating, delightful detail. As an added attraction, the charter trains use old–fashioned, honest–to–goodness steam locomotives instead of diesels. In August 1995, my ten–year–old son, Will, and I went on a trip to Ecuador with Trains Unlimited, Tours, an enterprise based in Portola, California, that organizes rail excursions all over the world for train enthusiasts. It was shortly after the withdrawal of government funding, and the forty–two of us who signed up thought that this might be the last opportunity ever—that is, the last chance to cover the railway from end to end and to do it behind steam. And so we had come from far and wide—from Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Japan, and Australia, as well as Canada and the United States.

Run–bys and False Starts

We arrive in Guayaquil late on a Saturday. Our leader, Thierry Nicolas, general manager of Trains Unlimited's European office (Brussels), is a savvy, widely traveled railroad buff fluent in English, Spanish, German, French, Dutch, and Portuguese, and thus tailor–made to guide our multinational party.

The Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos doesn't run into Guayaquil but terminates across the Río Guayas in Durán. Guayaquil is Ecuador's largest city, a hub of trade and commerce, an important seaport for the region, and the center of numerous industries. What a shock, then, to see the station and yards at Durán. The tracks are rusty and choked with weeds, and an air of neglect pervades the complex. A steam locomotive inside the large shed appears to be in working condition, but stands stone–cold, while pieces of others lie strewn about. Diesel–powered railbuses rest awkwardly in the open air, their trucks removed and their doors hanging open.

Fortunately, there are signs of life. Near the entrance to the yard stands our train. On the point is locomotive No. 11, a smart–looking Mogul–type—a steam engine with a wheel arrangement of 2–6–0 (two leading wheels, six driving wheels, and no trailing wheels). Built in 1900 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia, she has aged well and sports a recent coat of red paint with yellow trim. Behind the locomotive is the tender, boldly lettered "G&Q," for Guayaquil and Quito, a predecessor of today's Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos. Then comes a tank car carrying an emergency supply of water—for the engine, not the passengers. Following the tank car is a boxcar that holds maintenance–of–way tools. An unusual hybrid is next. It's a wooden boxcar converted sometime in the distant past. With two small windows and a large opening cut out of each side, it now serves as a second–class passenger car. Bringing up the rear of the train are two ancient clerestory coaches, painted red and identified as *Primera Clase*.

No. 11 has steam up, and Thierry signals the engineer to blow the whistle announcing our departure. Well, sort of. A main feature of this kind of trip is the "photo run–by," which works like this: First, the train stops to let the passengers off. Then it backs down the track and waits while everyone gets set: the appropriate lens, correct angle, proper exposure, etc. When all is ready, the train comes roaring back, past the carefully choreographed line of photographers. It stops up the line, then returns to retrieve its riders. The purpose of the photo run–by is to give you a chance to photograph the train as well as ride it—and photograph it in action, an important consideration for most rail buffs.

A variation on this theme is the "false start," which is a photo run–by that takes place at a station. The train

departs amid puffs of smoke, billows of steam, bell ringing, and whistle blowing. This grand event is carefully orchestrated—and faithfully documented. The train comes to a stop right away, however, and the passengers climb aboard. Then it takes off again, this time in earnest.

It's with a false start that our five–day trip through Ecuador begins. Once our departure has been captured on film, we are able to leave, and the train chugs slowly out of Durán, heading eastward toward the foothills of the Andes.

Mayhem in Milagro

The moment you climb aboard an Ecuadorian train, all rules are off. Indeed, the attitude of the Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos is pure laissez–faire: "Well, if that's really what you want to do, we certainly won't stop you." Having been alerted to the Ecuadorian practice of riding on top of the cars, some in our group begin the trip up on the roof. Intrigued, Will suggests that we join them. We quickly discover that it is not at all comfortable. And, with the train moving, it's clearly unsafe to be perched on the sloping metal roof of a bouncing, swaying car. But I must admit that I've never experienced anything quite like it. The appeal is powerful and immediate. To ride along while sitting out in the open air, with the countryside all around you and nothing but the sky above, is a wonderful and exhilarating way to travel.

The train runs directly through the center of the towns along its route, right down the main street, past houses and shops crowding in on both sides. We go through Yaguachi that way, through Naranjito, and most memorably through Milagro, where a large Sunday market has been set up along the main street—and smack across the railway track.

We are just settling down after a photo run–by at the edge of town when the train stops unexpectedly. Ahead of us is Milagro's main thoroughfare, and it's swarming with people. Booths, tables, carts, racks, displays, and large umbrellas block our way; buses, pickup trucks, cars, and bicycles add to the confusion. For a moment, we simply stand and stare, transfixed by the color, activity, and noise. For the people of Milagro, the Sunday market is routine; for us, it is a sudden and delightful treat.

Our enthusiasm soon wanes, however. Indeed, there is ample reason for us to be dismayed. Our itinerary has been carefully planned, and we still have many miles to go. To get through this chaos will surely require hours of patient waiting and delicate negotiations. But, of course, this is not the first time a train has confronted a crowded market, and before long, the merchants clear the way—although just barely. With a toot of the whistle, the train inches forward. Our concern for the future of the Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos increases as we creep along. Are there so few trains that no thought was given before setting up a market right across the track? No sooner does the train pass than the market regroups. We look back; the tracks have disappeared, lost beneath the throng of vendors and their merchandise.

From Bucay...and Back Again

After Milagro, we ride for twenty minutes or so, then stop for a photo run–by. We ride again, then stop to fill the tender with water. Ride again, then stop for a run–by. We become skilled at climbing up and down the side of the boxcar and take turns enjoying the choice spots at the front end of the car, where we can let our legs dangle over the side.

By two o'clock we are in Bucay, a seedy, unkempt town at the edge of the Andes. It's taken us five hours to cover less than sixty miles. (With all the stops and delays, we were traveling faster than this would suggest. Some of us estimate our train hit 30 miles per hour in spots—not bad for a steam engine almost a hundred years old.) It has been level running most of the way. But beyond Bucay, it's all uphill. From just under 1,000 feet, we will

climb to over 4,000 feet by the end of the day.

Our little locomotive is simply too light to pull even a small train like ours into the mountains, and at Bucay we say farewell to her. Locomotive No. 58, a larger and much heavier Consolidation–type (2–8–0), will take us from here. Also a product of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, but more recently (1953), No. 58 is painted utilitarian black, with white trim. She is a standard–gauge locomotive riding on a narrow–gauge frame, which gives her a confident, wide–shouldered look. Like No. 11, she is an oil–burner.

To get a train moving on a track that heads uphill *and* around a sharp curve—which is what happens at Bucay—is a challenge even for an accomplished engineer. The trick is to build up the right speed, just fast enough so the train won't stall, but not so fast that it will cause the driving wheels to lose their grip on the rails and spin. As our train successfully charges up the steep grade, the loud bark of the locomotive's exhaust echoes off the nearby buildings. Up on the roof, we exchange appreciative smiles.

Five miles up the line lies Ventura, and then it is on to Huigra, fifteen miles away. It has been a long day, and it's getting late. Will falls asleep quickly and is blissfully unaware of what happens next.

First, the locomotive breaks down. The injector, the device that feeds steam and water into the boiler, has been giving the engineer problems. Now it fails altogether. Because we are miles from the nearest village and even farther from the nearest road, we have no choice but to return to Bucay. Luckily, we can do this without taxing the locomotive. All the engineer has to do is release the brakes and let the train coast down the mountain. By now it is completely dark, outside and in—our antiquated train boasts neither electricity nor lights.

A bump and a lurch and a sudden stop

While we are rattling and clanking our way back through the Stygian darkness to Bucay, there is a bump and a lurch and a sudden stop. The wheels on one of the coaches have jumped the tracks. Miles from anywhere, the train has derailed. That such occurrences are commonplace on the poorly maintained railroads of Central and South America is of little comfort. I feel weary and helpless and begin to doubt my sanity. What was it that led me to subject my young son and myself to this so–called "vacation"? How could a father do such a thing to his child? And what about these mosquitoes? Do mosquitoes at this altitude carry malaria? Both Will and I have been put on a strict regimen of anti–malaria pills, but how effective are they?

At least it's a relief to see that the crew is prepared for a derailment. Using jacks and hammers from the boxcar, some old spikes found lying on the ground, and a tape measure, they set the rails at 42 inches, then get the errant wheels back on the track. They accomplish all this with surprising good humor, unfazed by the passengers and their flash cameras capturing them hard at work. Once back on the rails, the train tiptoes cautiously past the weakened section. It holds. We make it back to Bucay, but by now it's nearly midnight.

Our tribulations are not over. Although Huigra is only twenty miles away by train, it is much, much farther away over the narrow mountain roads. But somehow two buses are found, and we again leave Bucay, this time for good.

It's been a long time since lunch. We are hungry and thirsty and tired. A meal awaits us, but it's in Huigra. A hotel holds rooms for us, but it's in Huigra. It's good that we don't know how long this bus trip will last—we're told two and a half hours, but actually it will take a full five hours. Worst of all, No. 58 has broken down, and we know that No. 11 cannot handle the mountains. We have traveled all this way—for some of us, almost halfway around the world—to ride a steam train in the Andes. Is this the end?

Astonishingly, it isn't. Our luck suddenly changes, and from here on, the trip goes smoothly. And neither Will nor I come down with malaria.

Nariz del Diablo

Right at noon, our train, powered by the rejuvenated No. 58, steams triumphantly into Huigra. The crew worked all night to repair the injector and has brought the train back up the line: through Ventura, past the site of the derailment, and on up the canyon of the Chanchán River to Huigra. It's bright and sunny—a perfect day for roof riding.

Only a few miles up the track is the Devil's Nose and the switchback that was built back in the early years of the century as a way out of the valley. The concept is simple: The easiest way to ascend a mountain is to zigzag your way up. Since a train is unable to turn on a sharp radius, it needs a switchback, which resembles a Z that is tilted upward. To climb the Z, the train moves forward along the bottom track, then backward along the diagonal part of the Z, then forward again on the top. It's an inefficient and time–consuming process, but it's simple and effective—and much cheaper than building tunnels and

erecting trestles.

As its name suggests, the *Nariz del Diablo* is a large, protruding chunk of mountain, and the ascent by train is steep and dramatic. The climb provides spectacular views in every direction. The higher we go, the more breathtaking the vistas, particularly back down the valley toward Huigra. The train skirts the edge of the cliff, all the way up, and as we near the summit, I walk out onto the open platform at the back of the coach. Holding on tight to the grab irons, I lean over and look down. At my feet is the top section of the Z. Directly below is another narrow ledge, the middle of the Z. And far below that is the track at the base of the mountain.

Alausí lies near the head of the Chanchán River valley, less than ten miles from the Devil's Nose. To reach it, the train must climb a remarkable 5.5 percent grade. ("Remarkable" because trains run best on flat ground. Any grade greater than 1 percent—that is, a rise of one foot per hundred feet of linear track—strains a locomotive and limits the number of cars it can pull. A grade of 2 percent is considered quite steep. Any grade of 3 percent or more is to be avoided whenever possible. A grade of 5 percent or more is extremely unusual anywhere. But in Ecuador, steep grades are the norm, since the railroad climbs from sea level to almost 12,000 feet in just 125 miles.) The day ends in fine style with the vigorous climb into Alausí and a photo run–by at the impressive trestle on the edge of town.

Train Time in Alausí

By the third day, Will and I are feeling like seasoned railroaders. I may be having more fun than he is; I've loved trains and railroads all my life, and this trip, with its roof riding and spectacular scenery and hard–working steam engines and go–anywhere, do–anything–you–want spirit, is quickly achieving epic status in my eyes. But Will, who has not yet developed and may be spared this fanatical interest, is enjoying himself, too. Still, we are both glad he has brought along a large supply of books and tapes—the lengthy water stops and unexpected delays are beginning to get tedious.

There is yet another one of those delays this morning. Heading in our direction on the one–track railway, is the *mixto*, or mixed train (a train that hauls both freight and passengers), that runs between Riobamba and Bucay. There's no way we can leave Alausí until it arrives. To help the time pass, Thierry and Fernando arrange for a photo run–by in the middle of town. Tourists waiting for the diesel–hauled *mixto* get a kick out of seeing our train charge past. They, too, line up to take pictures. Unfortunately, one of the coaches derails.

Just as the crew prepares to rerail it, the *mixto* shows up, but because we are now blocking the single track, the *mixto* can't get by. No one seems particularly upset by this—least of all the local vendors, who are busy hawking alpaca sweaters and elaborate Indian belts and bracelets. They now have more potential customers. So do the boys who dart about, asking if we'd like a shoeshine. Remembering *The Most Beautiful Place in the World*, a book about a young Guatemalan boy who shines shoes in order to put food on his grandmother's table, I slip one of them a dollar. Happily, he offers to polish my sneakers.

Even with the coach back on track, we can't leave Alausí. While the *mixto* does some switching, our train is forced into a dead–end track to wait. Then, when the mixed train is finally ready to depart, a broken piece of brake equipment is discovered. Emergency repairs are required. This, of course, takes more time. It's now late morning, and the sun is high in the sky, bright, intense, and very hot. On the steam train, we're lucky. We can get off and wait in the shade of a building or sit under a tree on the edge of the main street. Aboard the crowded *mixto*, the passengers are stuck. Space on the roof is at a premium. The spectacular trip down the Devil's Nose lies just ahead, and no one is willing to relinquish a seat on top.

So there they sit and wait, baking under the unrelenting sun.

At last, the *mixto* leaves. Moments later, we pull out of the siding and resume our northbound trek. We climb from 7,655 feet to 10,623 feet in less than fifteen miles. Down below lie small, neatly divided fields, some fallow, others green with crops. Higher up, the mountainsides are bare, rough, and dry. Here and there, we pass small herds of sheep, cattle, or sometimes pigs. Most are tended by women wearing the traditional dark fedoras of the Andean Indians.

Simply messing about on a train

We are dazzled not only by the fascinating sights but also by the sounds, smells, and sensations of the train itself—the familiar clickety–clack of the wheels, the swaying of the cars, the squeals and squeaks as the train negotiates one sharp curve after another, the aroma of sun–warmed wood and metal, of pungent smoke and steam, the sound of the locomotive straining to climb the steep grade. I am reminded of the scene in *The Wind in the Willows* where Rat tells his new acquaintance Mole: "Believe me, my young friend, there is *nothing*—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats." The same goes for trains. I know exactly how Rat feels: the pleasure of being precisely where you want to be, the delight of traveling at a leisurely pace, the exhilaration of taking part in an adventure, the joy of being out in the fresh air and sunshine, the relaxation that comes from knowing all is well. What a treat it is for us to be in Ecuador on this beautiful day, simply messing about on a train.

Gazing on Chimborazo

Geographically, Ecuador is neatly divided into three parts. In the west are the coastal plains; in the middle, the Andes; and in the east, the lowland jungle (the Oriente), part of the Amazon River basin. The Andes run the length of Ecuador. They are split into the Eastern Range and the Western Range, and between them is a wide and fertile valley. In 1802, the German naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt traveled this beautiful north–south corridor, naming it the "Avenue of the Volcanoes." The highest of the volcanoes is Chimborazo. At 20,561 feet, it is the highest mountain in Ecuador. An inactive volcano, it is a few hundred feet taller than Alaska's Mount McKinley, the highest mountain in North America

Wednesday, the fourth day of our trip, is picture–perfect. Some of us have traveled in Ecuador before, but none has ever seen the summit of Chimborazo. Today, however, the mountain rises gloriously, unshrouded by mist or clouds. It is an awesome, inspiring, and dominating presence as we head north from Riobamba.

By now, Will and I have sampled almost all the accommodations our train has to offer. We have ridden in the coaches and in the passenger car, on the roof, and even in the cab of the locomotive.

But there is still one place we haven't tried. On its charter trains, the Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos actually lets passengers ride on the front of the locomotive—yes, *outside*—right above what in the old days was called the cowcatcher. (The term persists, but the proper name for that part of the locomotive is the "pilot.") Will and I decide to give pilot–riding a try. At the conclusion of a run–by, we walk up to the front of No. 58 and climb aboard. A large metal box filled with sand provides a handy and surprisingly comfortable seat. Above us is the headlight and below us, the coupler. Behind us is the door of the smokebox, and in front of us... *nothing*. The whistle blows to announce our departure. We pull our caps low and grab hold of some nearby pipes. The train begins to move. There is no doubt about it: Will and I feel, and are, exceedingly vulnerable.

But before long, we relax, distracted by the stunning view we have of Chimborazo. We are getting quite close now. Chugging along, rocking from side to side in our front–row seats, we are presented with a breathtaking panorama of terraced fields and snow–capped peaks.

A Different World

Poverty—pervasive and deeply rooted—plagues Ecuador. It follows us throughout our trip. Our view from the train is primarily of rural Ecuador, but even here we don't escape it. That afternoon, as we approach Ambato, many of the houses we pass are little more than shacks, and even the newer ones have a rough, unfinished look to them. They seem to provide shelter but little else. The grimness of the living conditions intensifies the closer we get to Ambato, the capital of Tungurahua province and a city of 100,000 people.

For North Americans like Will and me, travel in Ecuador takes some getting used to. The water everywhere is suspect, especially at lower elevations, and bottled water is recommended for drinking. As we have discovered, hot water is not always a given, even in the more expensive hotels. In similar fashion, electricity is usually, but not always, available. We learn this yet again upon our arrival in Ambato. Suddenly, all the buildings around us go dark. So do

all the traffic signals. But even though the streets and sidewalks are crowded with rush–hour traffic, there is little concern. When the electricity returns half an hour later, it's met with the same matter–of–fact response. You learn to adapt.

Destination: Quito

On Thursday, we continue along the Avenue of the Volcanoes. Our destination is Quito, the capital of Ecuador and the northern terminus of the Ferrocarilles Ecuatorianos, almost a hundred miles away. On the map it looks like a straight shot, but we will have to climb once more to well over 11,000 feet.

The morning is cloudless, and we start with a photo run–by just outside of town. Then it's on to Salcedo, where we stop long enough to visit the weekly livestock auction. People

A perfect day for roof riding

mill about on the large, dusty infield, tending or inspecting pigs, sheep, cattle, chickens, and llamas. Women in colorful sweaters or shawls conduct most of the business. For a cow and a calf, a buyer peels off bills from a large wad of *sucres*, but at 2,500 *sucres* to the dollar, I quickly lose count.

Yesterday it was Chimborazo; today it's Cotopaxi that dominates the landscape. At 19,347 feet, Cotopaxi is the second highest mountain in Ecuador. It is also the highest continuously active volcano in the world. Cotopaxi is notable because it looks the way a volcano is supposed to look, with gently sloping sides and an almost perfectly symmetrical cone. It lies practically on the equator, but its summit is covered with snow year round. Although there has not been a major eruption for well over a century, Cotopaxi has erupted often over the years, causing devastating damage to the towns and villages near its base, particularly Latacunga. Reportedly, at night when the clouds are low, the glow from the crater is reflected in the sky above.

After leaving Cotopaxi behind and taking a final ride on the pilot, the weather finally breaks. Just as we reach the outskirts of Quito, the sky darkens and it begins to rain. Even those of us riding up on the roof don't begrudge a change in weather at this point. Nor do we mind the fact that the trip is ending. Everything has gone well since the setbacks of Sunday night (which now seems so long ago). The roof-riding and the spectacular scenery, the tenacious steam locomotives, and the companionship of passengers and crew—all have proved more memorable than we had expected or even hoped for. It's been a demanding trip, and we're tired. But it's been worth the effort.

I'll Show You Mayan

Belize Jungle Expedition

by Larry Rice

"Larry, go back and come down again!" commands Jim Van Dijk. "I need another shot." Jim, a 32–year–old professional videographer, is poised nipple–deep in the jungle stream, a $50,000 Beta SP camera perched precariously on his shoulder. "And remember," he cautions. "Don't look at the camera! Just forget I'm here."

Pack straps gouge my shoulders, my knees ache, I itch, and all I can think about is food. Still, I do what I am told. After all, it's not that often you get to ham it up for a TV show.

Doing my best impersonation of Indiana Jones, I climb back up into the giant tree ferns and slog down into the emerald–green pool. "Great! Fantastic!" Van Dijk jabbers while slowly panning the big camera. Fifteen seconds of raw footage later, he lifts his eye from the viewfinder, sweat pouring in rivulets down his brow. "Thanks, man. I owe you a Belikin when we get out of this hell–hole."

"Yeah, right!" I snicker, plodding on. Jim "owes" us all Belizean beers for photographic favors, but it will be a while before we collect. Deep in the Maya Mountains of south–central Belize, there's no beer, no nothing, except what we carry in on our backs. This is another world, a green, dripping, dark tapestry where rivers disappear underground, howler monkeys roar from the treetops, thousand–year–old Mayan temples await discovery, ticks, chiggers and flesh–boring flies buzz and bite. Sure, an ice–cold beer would be nice. But what I crave most is a can of barbecue–flavored Pringles, and I don't even like Pringles. The jungle does strange things to a man.

Larry Rice is a wildlife biologist and freelance writer with an affinity for wild places and a newfound disdain for biting bugs. He is the author of Baja to Patagonia: Latin American Adventures *(available through the SAEC by calling 800–274–0568) and* Gathering Paradise: Alaska Wilderness Journeys, *available from Fulcrum Publishing (800–992–2908).*

For Allan: A Day's Work

Fifteen men—from four countries, of all ages, from different backgrounds—gather in an eight–sided house on a knoll in Belize. In the soft light of the setting sun, we gaze out on the western flank of the Mountain Pine Ridge, its rolling ridges cloaked in an extravaganza of tropical vegetation. It is scenery to savor—another time. It is the eve of our expedition, and we are tired from a hectic day of preparation—and a bit anxious.

The jungle does strange things to a man.

"For some of you," declares Jim Bevis, "this will be the hardest three weeks of your life." Bevis, 42, friendly and easy–going, will co–lead the expedition. He looks like a middle–aged Fidel Castro, right down to the Cuban cigars he smokes.

"The southern Maya Mountains are largely unexplored, and for good reason," explains the stocky, former Texan. "The limestone topography is extremely rugged; overland travel requires humping heavy packs over rough terrain with no established trails; daytime temperatures often reach 100 degrees, with humidity to match. As far as we can tell, not even *chicle* hunters venture here."

This will be Bevis' second traverse of these mountains. When answering questions about his first journey, he says that he lost over a pound of body weight a day, blew out two pairs of boots, suffered amoebic dysentery, and rubbed his back raw due to an ill–fitting pack. "If I tell you anything more, I might spoil the fun," he chuckles.

Suddenly serious, Bevis nods toward a large, dark–haired, Bunyanesque figure sitting in the shadows. "That man got us through the Maya Mountains last time. And

it's only because of him that I'm going back."

Under the pale yellow glow of kerosene lanterns, our eyes focus on the dark figure. There, standing 6' 6" and weighing in at a solid 235 pounds, is Jim Allan, our team leader and expedition organizer. Jim Allan may not be a household name in the United States, but in Canada he is something of a legend.

He lost over a pound of body weight a day

A wildlife biologist by training, Allan is the founder and Expedition Director of Ecosummer Expeditions, one of the oldest (established in 1974) adventure travel outfitters in North America. Long before "adventure travel" became vogue, Allan was leading backpack, mountaineering, dogsled, sea kayak, and canoe trips to remote sites all over the globe. He has spent months in the jungles and mountainous regions of Latin America and Asia, roamed nearly every nook and cranny of Canada's western coastline and much of the high Arctic, canoed Africa's Zambezi River; and kayaked in frigid waters off Greenland and Antarctica. Name a place, the more exotic the better, and odds are Allan has already been there.

Garbed in a black tank–top and baggy green river pants, Allan eases out of his chair and points to a map of Belize on the wall. "This is where we'll head into the bush," he says, his finger landing just east of the massive Mayan ruins of Caracol, a desolate spot on the Maya Mountains' north slope. "It's only about 35 kilometers as the toucan flies between here and the ocean side of the mountains where we'll come out. But don't let that fool you. On the ground it'll be closer to 100."

As Allan briefs us, we listen quietly, anxiously. There are only a handful of questions. Allan sums up on a cautionary note, "The first few days will be hard. We'll be wet. You may be toting 100 pound packs. The footing will be treacherous, the bugs ferocious. We're in for a bittersweet experience. Let's hope more sweet than bitter."

Sacks, Cries, and Videotape

It's three days into the trek. Rumor has it that we've only covered eight kilometers, although we'd swear it's been more. Except with Bevis or Orlando de la Oh, 43, a local *chiclero* and our lead scout, Allan rarely discusses our progress.

As predicted, the going is laborious and slow. Allan and Orlando are somewhere ahead, hacking away with machetes at the seemingly unassailable vegetation. Next in line are Carlos Yacab, and his cousin, José. They come from a small town near the Guatemala border and have been hired to carry the video equipment for the three–man film crew. The plan is to produce an hour–long pilot for an adventure travel television series.

We come to a spot where the stream flows over limestone ledges to form a succession of pellucid pools. Electric–blue morpho butterflies, the size of dinner plates, flutter above the water like characters from Disney's *Fantasia*. "Beautiful, aren't they?" I say to Carlos. Sweating under his heavy pack, he merely shrugs.

To keep from falling behind (Allan has made some caustic remarks about stragglers), I throw caution to the wind and walk straight into the pool. Halfway across, the water is at my chest. I take another step and even with an 80–pound pack, I float off my feet.

Before I can slosh up the opposite bank, someone yelps. Spinning around, I see Carlos face down. Held afloat by his waterproof backpack and clutching the Beta camera case for dear life, he sputters and kicks feverishly toward shore. At that moment, the video crew arrives. Seeing their precious camera in peril, Dick Hamilton, the beefy assistant producer, lunges in and grabs the case. Only when the camera is safe does he yank out poor Carlos.

The film crew assesses the damage while Carlos flounders about, coughing up water and gasping. "I think everything's okay," sighs Hamilton with relief, sponging up some water that has leaked into the "airtight" case. "But that was damn close." He hands the hefty Beta to Van Dijk, chosen for this assignment as much for his strength as his skill with a camera. Van Dijk will add the Beta to his load.

We're carrying more than video equipment. Besides the gear we need for exploring and filming a documentary, we're lugging along 30 pounds of collecting paraphernalia for Jan Meerman. A Dutch tropical biologist, 39, Meerman is conducting a biodiversity survey. This is his first backpack trip. Energetic and astonishingly skinny, with long froglike arms and legs, he sweeps his butterfly net back and forth like a tennis racket as he hops across boulders and logs, looking for plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, and anything else that flies, crawls or swims.

"The rich vegetative cover of the Maya Mountains is ideal habitat for rainforest wildlife, from jaguars and toucans to anacondas," says Meerman. "The chance of discovering new species is not unreasonable, since virtually no one has done any collecting where we're going." Meerman's equipment, from alcohol to plant presses, has been divided up among the team—30 pounds of bottles and other stuff that might have been food.

Shelter Set–up

We climb higher and higher into the dense forest of the Maya Mountains, past cascades, up gurgling streams, and over steep hills draped with oppressive vegetation. Luxuriant at river's edge, the forest is a tangle of trees, shrubs and epiphytes bound by spider webs and twisting vines as thick as your arm. The sun, moon, stars and sky become a distant memory as we forge deeper into the river cleft and overhanging canopy.

Now and then, Allan pauses to pinpoint our location, matching coordinates on his GPS (Global Positioning System) with his British–issue topographic map. "It's only a backup," he says in defense of his hi–tech instrument. "It doesn't take the place of a compass and good navigation skills."

Downpours soak us to the bone. When it isn't raining, the temperature and humidity soar. Sweat–stained and caked with grime most of the time, we each carry two changes of clothes, one filthy and mildewed, the other a bit cleaner and slightly drier set for evening wear.

Every evening, we chop and slash our campsite out of the virgin forest. Guiltily, I participate in the havoc wrought by a dozen machetes, but we have no choice if we want to sleep lying down. Meerman, an avid environmentalist, tells us not to worry. "Plants grow quickly," he says. "In a few years you'll never know we were here."

With the underbrush cleared, we stretch two large nylon tarps between trees for roofs. We roll out two other tarps to cover the ground. Five to six people sleep shoulder–to–shoulder in each shelter. These arrangements don't suit Orlando, José, Carlos, and Albert "Jonesy" Jones, a muscular, 56–year–old Carib and former jaguar hunter who has accompanied Allan on previous Belize jungle trips. They prefer all–natural materials and build their abode by weaving palm fronds together with vines to construct a cozy, rainproof lean–to.

If Only Hunger Were a Dream...

Ten days on the move have taken us over the Maya Mountains Divide nearly 1,000 meters above sea level and the highest point of our journey. But we are behind schedule. Allan picks up the pace.

The going is as torturous as the day we started. We trudge on, sweating our way up one ridge, then down into the valley, across stony stream beds, then up the next ridge. Up and down, up and down...and so on, endlessly. Monotony and fatigue bring on a leaden numbness, until we no longer notice the bites, blisters, bruises, cuts and scrapes, the fungus, the sweat trickling down our faces, and our godawful heavy packs. We trudge on in a dream.

If only our hunger were a dream. It's said that an army moves on its stomach. Well, this army isn't getting enough to eat. Our rations—dehydrated beans, rice, pasta, oatmeal, cheese, salami, jam, bread, and assorted high–energy bars—are nutritious enough, even tasty and keep well on the trail. The trouble is, there just isn't enough to go around.

Allan has appointed himself sole cook and doler–out of food, a joyless and thankless task. We crowd around him to receive our meager portions, our eyes shrewdly gauging the share doled out to the others. Allan mockingly compares us to a pack of slavering sled dogs. Too true. As the fat burns off our bodies, food has become an obsession. We consume every crumb, lick clean our bowls and fingers, and scrape the pots. Allan is above such weaknesses. He is last to eat and, when preparing dinner, abstains from sneaking a bite.

Morale sinks as our belts tighten. Allan deals with this one evening. "As an expedition like this goes on it gets easier on two counts," he lectures us. "Your pack gets lighter and your body gets stronger. The trick is to keep your mind from getting weaker."

I'm reminded of Teddy Roosevelt's 1914 expedition to Brazil's River of Doubt. This was a journey so grueling that it shortened the 26th President's life. Describing it, Roosevelt complained of clothes that were

never dry, rotten shoes, bruises on legs and feet that turned to sores, and insect bites turning into festering wounds. "After two weeks in the jungle, things begin to break down on a lot of different levels," Roosevelt wrote.

Morning Ritual

I awake to rain dripping and frogs trilling like a fax machine. I long for my bed at home and lie motionless as a diffuse green light spreads through the forest, signaling dawn.

Camp comes alive. Grizzled faces emerge from under dew–soaked tarps; naked bodies tumble out of leafy lean–tos. Fifteen men—young and old, boisterous and quiet, get ready for another long day in one of the world's most punishing jungles, their lives focused on the very basics: shelter, fire, water and food. Especially food.

Meals are simple. Breakfast is a half–cup of oatmeal and a swig of coffee or powdered fruit drink to wash it down. "Not enough here to fill the belly of a cockroach," someone grouses.

We've set up a first–aid clinic under Bevis' tarp. Besides the usual bites, cuts, and bruises, some strange new growths are showing up on wrinkled, water–logged feet. "Jungle rot," Doc Bevis pronounces, staring closely at a blotched, oozy fungus. It starts on the toes and spreads outward like a prairie fire. He rummages through his medical kit of bandages, pills, ointments, and salves. "Why, hell, none of this will do any good," he says, shucking the pile aside. "The only remedy is to keep your feet dry. Let me know if you succeed."

The Breaking Point

Our pace slows to a crawl as we worm our way through deep, dark canyons laced with waterfalls. We brush by orchids and tropical flowering plants, but only Meerman stops briefly, logging his observations into a micro–cassette recorder. The rest of us move on, heads down and shoulders sagging.

Next to me, Guy Robinson, the video team's director and writer, suddenly stumbles and falls hard. Grimacing with pain, the tall, former actor angrily throws off his pack. He drops his head in his hands. "I've had enough! I'm a city person, not a jungle explorer," he groans. He sits there for a while, then accepts a helping hand and struggles to his feet. "Sorry. I'm having a bad day, that's all," he apologizes, rubbing dirt off his face. "My God, what I wouldn't give for a pint and a pub right now!"

The heat and humidity is taking its toll on the entire video crew. It's wreaking havoc on their equipment as well. The lens on the Beta has cracked. It's totally useless. All that's left is a miniature backup camera, and it's uncertain how long it will last since it runs on solar batteries, and recharging these is proving difficult in this twilight world.

Imagine hauling out a body

To add to the film crew's woes, Allan has become far less attentive to their requirements. "He knew from the outset how vital he was to our project," Robinson laments to me. "It seems now he resents having us along at all. He can't even spare us five minutes for an interview." A hard–driven professional, Robinson's distress mounts with one snag after another. "The video is the only reason I'm here," he grumbles. "I can't go back to Vancouver

without something to show."

We make camp late, on a ridge far above rushing waters. A rich forest surrounds us, tall, straight oaks with huge buttress roots festooned with creeping vines, sprouting palms and ferns as large as Volkswagens. It is Jurassic Park without the special effects.

Again this evening, we have a "Jan Moment" with Meerman, a gifted speaker, lecturing on the natural wonders of the day. At it's end Allan makes an announcement. He and Orlando have scouted the route ahead. "It doesn't look promising," he says ominously. "Our descent down Snake Creek tomorrow will be the most treacherous of the trip so far. It's a steep–walled gorge. In places, we'll have to use ropes. *Don't take any chances!* You know how difficult it is getting through this country. Imagine the difficulty of hauling out a body."

A boiling mass of army ants swarms through camp

The briefing over, as we prepare for bed, a boiling mass of army ants swarms through camp. Ants everywhere, crawling over our legs, arms and faces, biting us. Then, just as quickly as they came, they're gone, off to rampage somewhere else in the forest.

The next day, the stress takes its toll. Haggard and physically spent, some just drop, collapsing on boulders, logs, the ground.

After reaching the next campsite, Jonesy, José, and Carlos, are sent back to give the worn–out stragglers a hand. Night is falling as they shuffle in. Allan is there, but shows no sympathy. Loud enough for all to hear, he snidely remarks, "So, Jonesy, beginning to fall apart, are they? Well, at least you and the fellows were there to help them."

A Significant Find

We barely have the energy to set up the tarps and wash up. It's disheartening to learn it has taken us seven grueling hours to cover just three kilometers.

Suddenly, there's a flurry of excitement. Arran, Bevis' 16–year–old son, while scrounging for firewood, uncovers a stone wall under a blanket of leaves. About one meter high and seven meters long, the wall is made of sculpted limestone blocks. And there's more. A nearby mound is littered with blocks. It looks as if we might be camped near a Mayan temple.

Meerman is excited. "This is a significant find," he announces, pacing back and forth, scribbling notes in his journal. "The Maya traveled through these mountains from places like Caracol. This temple may date back to that period. When we get back, we'll report it so it can be properly documented and mapped."

Over dinner, Allan remarks that camping here was no mere coincidence. "I have a 'sixth sense' about this kind of stuff," he says casually. "Something told me to push on until we got here." Bevis, for one, believes him. "Big Jim thinks like a Maya," he says admiringly. I glance over at Van Dijk, who rolls his eyes.

In the morning, the film crew shoots what they can of the ruin. We leave the ancient site in peace and resume our descent along Snake Creek's bedrock of water–polished slate.

The End of our Lifeblood

A few hours later, Allan calls a halt. The break is welcome. We slide off our packs and drop to the ground. Orlando borrows my map and studies it for several minutes with José and Carlos. Conversing in rapid–fire Spanish, they use the spine of a *warrie cohune* palm as a ruler. "We have five, maybe six days left if there are no ups and downs," says the wiry scout. "Of course, there are *many* ups and downs."

Late that afternoon, Snake Creek ends. The shallow stream—our lifeblood through the forest—is swallowed up by a sinkhole at the base of a limestone cliff. Fascinating from a hydrological standpoint, for us it means a major detour. Thickly wooded precipitous bluffs loom overhead—impossible to scale with our heavy loads. We camp back at the first sinkhole. At least there is water. It is our thirteenth night in the bush.

Though built like a middleweight boxer and with the stamina of a man half his age, Jonesy is showing signs of strain. For two days now, he's had a fever."Did you get much sleep last night?" I ask. "No, mon," he says wearily, "Not much. The flies were bad. They bite me bad. Can't eat either. Oh, yes, mon, I lose many pounds." Earlier that day I looked on in disgust and amazement as Bevis lanced boils on Jonesy's back, then squeezed and pried out several long and wormlike larval bot flies.

The dinner of pesto and sourdough bread is designed to lift morale. Our portions are the largest yet. "Have to give the starving troops a little more food. Hear there's been a little grumbling going on," says Allan caustically while ladling out rations. All is well until someone casually mentions that we're low on sugar. This makes Big Jim angry. "So, maybe you should move on down to the next restaurant," he snaps. "See if you can find some sugar there!"

The Jan Moment is just what we need to calm things down. "Today was strenuous, but successful," says the gaunt biologist. "I caught two

species of butterfly. They're new to me, and possibly new to science. I also identified two species of passionflower and an orchid. These constitute new records for Belize." Staring reflectively at the fire, he pauses and grins. "Yes, it was a good day, but when this trip is over, I think I'll hang up my backpack for good."

Cut to the Bladen

After two days of hard hiking, Snake Creek reappears, then a half–hour later flows into an immense cave at the bottom of a rocky ridge and vanishes once more. "Many cave systems underlie the Maya Mountains," Meerman says, shining his feeble headlamp into the gaping black hole. "The Chiquibul complex, of which this is a part, extends into Guatemala and is probably the largest cave system in the Americas."

Jonesy, an expert tracker, is more interested in what's happening just outside the cave. In the wet clay, he spots the tracks of peccary (a wild pig), spoor of tapir, and the pug–toed imprints of the endangered jaguar. This big spotted cat is an opportunistic predator and will eat almost anything it can catch. "Does that include humans?" Van Dijk asks, camera rolling. "Oh, yes, mon," Jonesy laughs, the whites of his eyes gleaming against his jet–black face.

A quick probe of the cave is undertaken and the report is discouraging. "The Snake is dry,"says Allan, his arms and bare shoulders criss–crossed by crimson scratches. "Our best bet is to abandon this drainage completely and cut over to the Bladen River."

"What will the terrain be like?" someone asks.

"The map is vague about that," says Allan, smiling. "I guess that means we'll be doing some more exploring, eh?"

Allan fills his water bottle from a cave seep and summons Orlando, Jonesy and Arran to join him. "It's still early. We'll try and find a route over to the Upper Bladen," he tells Bevis. "No use moving everyone until we know for sure if there's water there."

With nowhere to go and little to do, we mere mortals who remain behind settle down for a long wait. To pass the time, Gerry Williams, a periodentist and world–class mountaineer from Florida, dutifully cleans his teeth with the plastic toothpick from his Swiss Army knife. John Field, an electrical engineer from Chicago, sits on a rotten log and amuses himself by plucking seed ticks off his pale white skin. "Seventy–one so far. I'll let you know when I hit a hundred," he announces. Hearing this, Van Dijk looks at me and mouths the words, "I THINK I'M GOING INSANE!" Bevis breaks out a stack of two–month–old Belize City newspapers that Meerman brought for his plant specimens. One article after another describes in gory detail some murder or act of mayhem. "Makes you damn glad to be out here in the wilderness," Bevis notes, passing the papers around. I can't tell if he's serious.

Allan and crew shuffle in at dusk, parched and exhausted. Unfortunately, the Upper Bladen is bone–dry. "That means we'll have to hike with full water supplies," says Allan, looking more weary than I've seen him. "We'll fill up at some waterholes along the way."

Our brushy campsite crawls with seed ticks. Fumbling with flashlights, duct tape, and tweezers, we extract the tiny creatures from our bodies. I discover scores of ticks embedded in my arms and legs, thighs, belly, butt, and genitalia. "Hey, what are friends for?" mutters Van Dijk, pulling another six–legged bloodsucker from my scalp. "Just don't ask me to pick them off below the belt."

We reach the Bladen around noon the next day to find not so much as a puddle in its rock–and–gravel bed. Then it's up yet another bluff, looking for water as well as a way out.

Near dusk, we discover a waterhole. "This is camp, boys," Allan says, shedding his mammoth pack. "No telling where the next water is." The scummy puddle swirls with wiggling things. But who cares about such trifles? We covered nine kilometers today, our best distance to date.

The Mite–y and the Meek

At dawn, we are awakened rudely by a troop of howler monkeys belting out their strange gasps and hoots high in the treetops.

"You look like hell," I chide Williams, normally the most well–groomed among us. "Sleep well?"

"Not at all," he growls. "Just like every night."

I know how he feels. Chiggers. Williams and I are plagued more than the others.These microscopic mites are eating us alive. Nighttime is the worst, when the creatures are most active. With warped pride, Williams and I compare bites. I have 390 raised, red welts, 35 more than he does. "You win," he concedes.

The next day, our search for water pays off. We cross the Bladen River again, but this time there's running water. Like desert travelers stumbling upon an oasis, we shed packs, strip off moldy clothes, and wallow in the stream. Flat on my belly, I lower my head and drink deeply. Water has never tasted so good.

At Last

At precisely six p.m. on February 3, we reach Belize's Southern Highway at the small Mayan village of Golden Stream. The last eight ki-

lometers we slogged through goo so deep we sank up to our hams at every step. Now, some of us are skeptical. Can this muddy track actually be one of Belize's main roads? Apparently so. Our pickup team shows up in a 4x4, and we all pig–out on fresh bread, pastries, and grilled steak—all of us, that is, except Allan. Although he's lost more weight than any of us, he waits, as is his custom, until everyone else has eaten.

We spend the night on the dirt floor of a thatched hut exposed to malaria–carrying mosquitoes. Supposedly to ward off vampire bats, a single kerosene lantern glows faintly on a beam overhead. Like the rest of us, Van Dijk is too keyed up to doze. He would rather talk as we await the sunrise. He, like many of us, is amazed that we have reached our destination and have done it without serious mishap. But our success is no surprise to Big Jim. In a rare relaxed mood, Allan chuckles from his sleeping bag. "Why, of course we made it," he says, confident to the very end. "Would I ever steer you wrong?"

To join one of Jim Allan's hard–core ventures, call Ecosummer Expeditions at 800/465–8884. Ecosummer also organizes less arduous adventures on the reef and in the rainforest of Belize, as well as other locations.

The Two Faces of Eva

The Enduring Legend of Evita Perón

By Marifran Carlson

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Eva Perón is the most controversial and internationally renowned female Latin America has ever produced. A glamorous actress and the mistress of General Juan Perón, she became the loyal wife of Juan Perón after his rise to the Presidency. Eva Perón's lust for political power and financial wealth, along with her programs to bring economic and social justice to the poor, made her both the most loved and the most hated historical figure in Argentine history. In death she is even more powerful and controversial than during her brief public life. But who was she, really? Saint or sinner? Lady of hope, the spiritual leader of her nation? Or a common prostitute, defiler of Argentina's national patrimony?

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Saint or sinner?

These are the questions asked about Argentina's infamous icon. Long ago, I gave up trying to answer these questions by contributing my own scholarly assessment of the short and eventful life of Eva Perón. Like others before me I found that the myth and reality (I presumed there was such a thing as reality) of Eva Perón are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them. Now that I have decided not to pursue the futile task of sorting out her life in a logical and orderly fashion, I am content to try to peel back the layers of Eva's captivating personae by indulging my morbid curiosity about the Evita cult in Argentina. I find myself as fascinated with the Argentine people's never–ending obsession with Eva Perón as with the woman herself.

A Psycho-Social Phenomenon

Eva Perón resembles characters created by writers of Latin American magical realism. Like Clara del Valle in Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, she is endearing and eccentric, half-witch and half-angel. Her ghost haunts all who crossed her path. Her spiritual majesty and despotic, controlling personality dominate those she loves and those she hates.

Endearing and eccentric, half-witch and half-angel

Perhaps the Argentine psychiatrists who devoted years of painstaking research, writing bulky volume upon volume psychoanalytic analysis of Eva Perón and her enduring legacy are correct when they write that the entire Argentine population has internalized the contradictory myths of Evita. It may be true that everyone grows up in Argentina shares an unconscious idealization of one image of her or the other. Certain it is that she is seen by most Argentines as having been either totally good or totally bad.

To be used by Perón was, for her, a privilege.

Eva Perón is a psycho-social phenomenon. An illusive character, her real or imagined qualities are used by those who see her as the devil incarnate to blame her for everything that has ever gone wrong in Argentina. Those loyal to her wave saintly portraits of on their banners, regarding her as the only legitimate spokesperson for Argentina's oppressed masses. Pictures of her beautiful face and recordings of her raspy voice are used by her followers to stir people up about everything from politics to soccer championships. In her ghost-written autobiography, *My Mission in Life*, Eva said that she was happy to be used by Perón and would willingly do whatever he wanted, no matter what. She helped mobilize political support and destroy his enemies. His enemies were her enemies. To be used by Perón was, for her, a privilege.

Forty years later, everyone uses Evita Perón. She is alive today in the hearts and minds of Argentines because she has not outlived her usefulness.

The love-hate relationship felt by Argentines for Eva Perón intensified after her premature death from cancer in 1952. These conflicting feelings surfaced and account for the long-term collective preoccupation with the fate of her corpse. Her body was stolen by Perón's military enemies in 1956, buried and exhumed several times, but carefully preserved, it remained intact.

In 1976, after 21 years of being carted around on two continents, her marbleized, doll-like body was finally brought back to Argentina and laid to rest. Looking like an artfully crafted piece of Limoges crystal, her cadaver was placed in the Duarte family crypt in the Recoleta cemetery in downtown Buenos Aires. The art nouveau tombs of Recoleta are popularly known as the houses of the dead in the city of the dead. On Sunday afternoons hundreds of Argentines visit the cemetary, to enjoy their picnic lunches and pay homage to Evita while sitting beneath her statue and those of other illustrious Argentines on the ornate streets of this strange urgan phenomenon.

This desire to capture the essence of Evita, to be physically and emotionallly close, is as intense for some foreigners as well. In 1991, the North American writer Yvonne Mueller, got caught up in the cult of Evita. She had come to Buenos Aires to do research for a play about the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the brave women who, for two decades, search for the bodies of their missing children. Fascinated by the Argentine rituals and symbols of death, Mueller found a striking parallel between the disappearance of Evita, a national symbol, and the disappearance of thousands of young politically active idealists during the 1960s and 1970s.

Mueller believes Argentina's obsession with Eva Perón and *Los Desaparicidos* (the young activists killed in the Dirty War) reveals a deep love of violence and sexual perversion. With great dramatic flourish she speculates, as have others, that Eva Perón's embalmer, the Spanish pathologist Dr. Pedro Ara, was a necrophiliac. While working to preserve her body, so the story goes, desire overrwhelmed him and, driven by lust, he penetrated her.

Mueller did not lack for juicy gossip in writing her story—the Argentine tabloids have always pandered to people's fantasies about Evita Perón. Seamy newspapers of the late 1950s luridly described Pedro Ara inviting his friends to urinate and defecate on her body. In charge of guarding her body, Dr. Ara became mesmerized by Evita's beauty, even in death. Victim of his perverse passion, the newspapers sniggered, Dr. Ara violated her in death, indulging in oral, genital, and anal intercourse with her remains.

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Still, even if I cannot understand it myself, it is certain that my feeling of indignation at social injustice is the force which has led me by the hand, since my earliest recollections, to this day... and that it is the final cause explaining how a woman who in some people's eyes sometimes seems "superficial, common and indifferent," can decide to live a life of incomprehensible sacrifice.

Eva Perón

My Mission in Life

The Argentines would not let Evita die.

Dr. Ara denied such allegations and, in his book *The Case of Eva Perón*, described the meticulous procedures her preservation required. He was entrusted by Juan Perón himself to keep Evita's body from harm and protect her remains in a sanitary environment, safe even from any germs Perón might carry during his thrice–daily visits. Only Ara and Perón might touch her rock–hard remains. But in the end, Ara lost her. In 1955, Perón was overthrown and forced into exile. The military took over and took pains to purge the country of the passions Evita inspired, alive or dead. Evita's body disappeared. Ara returned to a life of academic obscurity. But it didn't work. The Argentines would not let Evita die.

Evita in the Media

I have been traveling to Argentina for almost twenty years, yet I am still astounded by the deep emotions—from rancorous denunciation to spiritual ecstasy—that Evita's name inspires in otherwise rational people. National frustration with increasing poverty and social injustice is expressed by imagining what Evita would do if faced with them. Splashed across the walls of apartment houses, bus stations, and government buildings graffiti proclaim to passersby that Eva Perón would not have tolerated the high cost of groceries and other indignities people are forced to endure today: "If Evita had not died at thirty–three, she would have spared Argentina from the suffering inflicted by outside forces..."

"If Evita were alive today, she would be a Montonera" was a rallying cry for youth. Naive and tragic, it encourages violence against the social order. In the late 1960s, the Montoneros, a Perónist guerrilla faction, instigated revolution under the symbolic leadership of Evita Perón. Had not so many young people died during this period of political upheaval and the resulting backlash (the Dirty War) it's amusing to envision Eva Perón defying her husband and casting off her Balenciaga ball gown to lead the underground life of an urban terrorist. In the truth, however, the Montonero guerrillas were among Juan Perón's most formidable enemies.

In 1972, Perón returned to Argentina. Assuming the presidency after 17 years in exile, he immediately set about smashing the young revolutionaries who used his and Eva's words to condemn his return to power. Eva Perón, long dead, but still alive in spirit, returned to Ar-

gentina in 1976. Once again, both friend and foe exploited her for their own purposes. That Eva Perón was unswervingly loyal to Perón and the programs he supported was lost in the highly charged atmosphere of the period. Estimates of the body count of the Dirty War are somewhere between ten and thirty thousand. Some have found ways to blame Evita for this national tragedy. They would do well to look at why Evita's image has been endlessly distorted, exploited, and resurrected.

Nation-builder or nation-destroyer?

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Today, Juan Perón is more or less discredited. In uplifting the downtrodden, he is seen as less committed than his wife Evita. Having separated the couple in their minds, Argentines by and large now worship only Evita. Paintings and altered photographs of Evita, a halo crowning her platinum blond hair, are common. Her picture adorns the cover of Perónist Party literature, though there is little or nothing about her inside. The woman portrayed by the Perónist Party is Santa Evita, defender of the workers, the woman who gave dignity back to the poor and disenfranchised through the educational and philanthropic agencies she created, most notably, the Eva Perón Foundation.

Eva Perón's tactic for supporting her vast network of day care centers, hospitals, orphanages, and the like was to exact tribute from her wealthy enemies. She reasoned that, together with the Argentine masses, she was entitled to the major portion of the landed oligarchy's riches. After all, it was hard–working people like herself who made Argentina the prosperous land that it was. Her mission in life, she believed, was to serve the husband who gave her a purpose and the power to achieve it and the millions of Perón's followers who had been denied the respect they deserved. The woman entrusted with a sacred mission is the image of Eva Perón that she and her supporters promoted. She is portrayed as a woman who sacrificed everything, her health, and ultimately her life, so that those who shared her hatred for the upper classes might have educational opportunities and job security.

What those who loved Eva Perón miss most today is the hope she gave them. It was a gift from one of their own. Women did not resent her ostentatiousness when she decked herself out in expensive designer clothes and jewels. Quite the contrary. To them, she was a role model, living proof that material and social success could be attained even in Argentina's rigid class system.

Seen as a relentless pursuer of goals or, hungry for power, pushing people aside, Eva Peron is viewed sometimes as either a nation–builder or a nation–destroyer. For the politically naive, it's easier to blame a corpse than examine the country's faults. Eva Perón's followers formed the base of Juan Perón's fragile, multi–class coalition that ruled Argentina from 1946 to 1955. Eva Perón repeatedly proclaimed that she was selflessly devoting herself to her husband's goal to uplift the Argentine people. All she asked in return was that others follow him as blindly as she.

Class and Gender Wars

In her quest for riches, political power, and immortality, she made many enemies. A notable legacy of Evita is the enduring hatred she inspired on the part of her enemies, past and present.

In intellectuals and professional people of my acquaintance this animosity is expressed in highly personal terms: "She was uncultured and lower–class—little more than a whore," they say, or "A pretentious provincial slut who, using men, slept her way to the heights of power." Her crowning acheivement was to capture the heart, body, and mind of Juan Perón, who is seen as a besotted fool who let a sexually aggressive tart half his age control him.

Her crowning achievement was to capture the heart, body, and mind of Juan Perón

There is evidence to support the accusations against Evita, but not that she was a prostitute. Intelligent and ambitious, she did what many Argentine women of her day did. To attract and be supported by a wealthy older man was typical for women lacking money or education. To call every woman who ever accepted money and meals from a man a prostitute would leave very few virtuous Argentine women. Still, many upper and middle class Argentines found particularly offensive Evita's calculating rise to power and her successful manipulation of Juan Perón. But what, I wonder, do they resent—her lower–class background or her tenacious use of feminine wiles to get what she wanted? Perhaps, a little of both.

Interestingly, many Argentine women, including some feminist activists, refuse to credit Eva Perón for championing women's civil and political rights. Few acknowledge that it was Eva who insisted that economic independence be the foundation for women's liberation. Eva believed in fair wages and secure jobs for women and elimination of class–based oppression and male dominance. Women acheived the right to vote and attained elective national office for the first time during Juan and Eva Perón's reign.

Still, Eva Perón never called herself a feminist. Indeed, she had nothing but contempt for the leaders of the Argentine women's movement, claiming that the feminist activists of her day were masculine, women who didn't wear make–up because they wanted to be men. She also said that the feminists had no interest in helping lower–class women.

This infuriated the feminist organizations. For decades, a small movement of professional women had been trying, unsuccessfully, to achieve the vote for women. In 1946, Juan and Evita swept the rug from under them, proclaiming themselves champions of women's rights. At a stroke, they achieved what the liberal and democratic–socialist women of Argentina's feminist movement could not—organize masses of women around a popular cause.

The Peróns were not democratically inclined. It is not surprising that middle and upper class women, committed to building Argentine democratic institutions, failed to support Eva and Juan Perón. In fact, the Peróns' co–opting of the women's movement so angered them that they refused to work with the couple on women's suffrage. When women's suffrage was granted in 1947, they refused to vote under a Perónist administration. The truth is, however, that an upstart radio and film actress and her authoritarian partner deserve the credit for enfranchising Argentine women.

In 1977, I interviewed Alicia Moreau de Justo (1885–1986), one of Argentina's first women physicians and a

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pioneer in the Argentine women's movement. A leader of feminist and socialist organizations for eighty years, she remianed anti–Perónist to the core. It was only recently that she could admit to herself and anyone else that the great animosity she bore toward Eva Perón might be misguided. Her change of attitude towards Evita came about because so many working–class women credit Evita for bringing about women's political and economic progress. Moreau de Justo's insight did not come easily. After all, Moreau de Justo was one of those "masculine women who didn't wear make–up," a middle–class professional who, so claimed Eva, wanted to masculinize Argentine females.

Past Tense

January 22, 1944 was a momentous day for Eva Duarte, and, as it turned out, for the Argentine people. In Eva's words, on that "marvelous day" she met Juan Perón. Nothing that happened to her before was of any consequence—her real life began when she found her true love and devoted teacher. From that day forward her background was irrelevant. To her, the only important things were Juan Perón and his cause which she embraced as her own. Unfortunately for Eva, her transformation failed to bring closure to the traumas and struggles of her first twenty–five years. Although she might desire to be a woman without a past, she carried this emotional baggage until the day she died.

Eva Perón's childhood is probably the only portion of her life not shrouded in mystery. The driven, often hysterical and angry survivor of a difficult childhood belied the tranquil, self–controlled image she tried to create. Her attacks on former friends over imagined betrayals, her angry shrieks and insults aimed at all who threatened her newly found security, all revealed the scars of her past. She learned at an early age, she said, there were two kinds of people in the world—the privileged and the underprivileged. This angered and oppressed her. It was this that drove her to rob the wealthy to enrich herself and give to the poor.

When Evita told her followers about the hypocritical moral values of the ruling class, she spoke from personal anguish. It grew out of a childhood filled with emotional pain and humiliating deprivation, born of poverty and a society that looked down on her illegitimate birth. Her eyes and her voice conveyed the agony of a frightened and lonely child, rejected by her schoolmates, the subject of gossip by so–called respectable members of society. Until transformed by Juan, said Evita, she was resigned to being a victim. From Perón and her admirers, she received the appreciation and acceptance she never got as a child, but it never soothed her rage and bitterness toward those who considered themselves socially superior.

Although wary and not a little weary of Eva Perón iconography and the countless tales of her tragic past, I must admit to sympathetic feelings when, in 1984, I briefly visited the town where she spent several years as a young girl. It's impossible to understand all the Eva Perón stories that make up the myth without seeing from whence she came.

Eva Perón was on my mind when I took the night train from Buenos Aires across the vast pampas to Mendoza in the foothills of the Andes. The previous evening, I had seen a propaganda film called "La Real Evita." The documentary used old footage from the late 1940s and early 1950s to resurrect Eva once more. This time the idealized image was reshaped for the political purposes of todays Perónist politicians. A hundred miles out of Buenos Aires, the conductor interrupted my musings to announced Junín, the next stop. Junín, I remembered, was the town Eva had left at age fifteen to become an actress in Buenos Aires. Looking out the window at the dimly lit streets, I saw a quiet provincial city with rows of white–washed one story houses. After pulling into the station, I walked around. Junín is the kind of place that stifles the hopes and dreams of youth. Such places lack educational opportunities, and low expectations prevail. Nothing seems to happen here. Real life is somewhere else—in Hollywood or Buenos Aires.

I could see why Eva Duarte's yearned for a better life elsewhere, understand the call of the big city. Some say she ran off with Agustin Magaldi, an aging Lothario tango singer who played one night gigs in Junín and other pampa towns. No one knows if it's true, but what does it matter?

Eva Perón was a dreamer with the will to escape and realize her dreams. She survived Junin and then Buenos Aires, unlike many young girls before her. She carved out a successful stage and radio career before she was rescued by the prince who became king.

Immortality?

Still, for many Argentines, Eva Perón embodies the evil, sensuous woman with a dubious past—a threat to traditional family values. But Eva Perón did not destroy the Argentine social structure or class system. Her accomplishments, the institutions she set up to help working women and their children, exist no more because no one who cared

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as much as she did. Evita and Juan had emptied the government coffers and the pockets of their rich enemies and dipped into trade union pension funds. With no children, the vast fortune Eva amassed went to Juan. With it, he lived in regal splendor on his Spanish estate, slowly selling her jew-

els and lamenting the fact that she was not alive to share in his triumphs and mourn his defeats. He consoled himself by marrying Isabelita, the ballet dancer. But Isabelita was no match for Evita. Even as President of Argentina after Perón's death in 1974, she continued to live in her rival's shadow.

Eva Perón craved immortality. In her final days, she thanked Juan Perón and the Argentine people for giving her the opportunity, to loosen, if only slightly, the iron grip of the oligarchy.

Certain it is that, had she not left Junín, we would know nothing of Eva Duarte. As the train pulled out of the station, I wondered if the Argentines would let Eva Perón rest in peace. I wonder now if she would ever want them to.

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I have always lived at liberty. Like the birds, I have always liked the fresh air of the woods. I was not even able to tolerate that degree of servitude which is part of life in one's parents' home or the life of one's home town. Very early in life I left my home and my town, and since then I have always been free. I have wished to live on my own, and I have lived on my own.

Eva Perón

My Mission in Life

Photographs in this article courtesy of the Archive General de la Nación.

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Raimondi, continued from page 7

From 1859 to 1869, he undertook a number of great journeys across the length and breadth of Peru. For almost twenty years, Raimondi worked twelve to fourteen hours a day like Alexander von Humboldt did.

Raimondi contributed much to science, continuing the studies begun by Ruiz, Pavon, and Dombay in botany and illustrating in watercolor hundreds of new species. The most famous species he described was the *Pourretia gigantea*, rebaptized *Puya raimondii* in his honor.

Raimondi also did much to advance zoology, geology, and geography and made significant contributions to archeological studies, writing six volumes on Peru and countless articles, studies, and reports. Three of his Peruvian volumes were published posthumously by the Lima Geographic Society (1902–1913).

He died in Northern Peru on October 26, 1890.

One description of Raimondi was that he "lived like a Franciscan and had the knowledge of a Leonardo." Indeed, he was a man of culture in the widest sense of the word and deserves both further study and a more fitting place in the pantheon of great scientists.

Chris Cochran

A Tribute

by Kyle Bohnensteihl

I remember sitting in a tent with Chris, somewhere—and there were lots of somewheres— philosophizing about dying in the mountains. How it might happen, what to do with the body, how it would feel if it were partly our fault. "Could I have your climbing rack?" We discussed what we'd feel if a climbing partner died, feelings I'm now having. Although Chris didn't die in a climbing accident, he did die in the mountains, with a partner, maybe in bad weather, certainly in dangerous terrain in a third–world country. It happened on April 29, 1997, the day after his 26th birthday, on Mt. Aoral in central Cambodia. Chris's death was a terrible loss to all who knew him.

Details of the plane crash have come in over the last month. The accident seems like so many others. The cause is still unknown. Working for the American firm LCT, Chris was doing aerial gravity–magnetic surveys over the Tonle Sap (Great Lake) in central Cambodia. He had recently completed another project with the same company in the jungle of northern Peru. Reportedly, the company was very responsible, concerned with safety and commited to running a first–class operation. For Chris, the lure of the job was clear—good money, the excitement of flying, a chance to explore a different country, and the promise of a U.S. vacation on the way back to Peru. Chris knew the risks of flying at night in a Cessna Caravan. He wrote about navigation problems in his e–mails from Cambodia. He had other concerns. No lights in the villages below meant he couldn't get a reference point. He described it as "dark as the inside of a cow."

Chris and the pilot operated out of an airfield in Kampong Chnang, 55 miles northwest of Phnom Penh. One morning the aircraft did not return. Singapore officials monitor EPIRB frequencies. They picked up a transponder signal on the slopes of Mt. Aoral, Cambodia's highest mountain. The rescuers had a difficult time reaching the crash site. It took nearly three days before a helicopter could get into the crash site. The rescue team included US Special Forces medics. The risks they took to recover the bodies, including spending the night there, is appreciated by his family and friends.

The affection Chris inspired is seen in the letters sent to his family by his Cambodian co-workers and others. A Buddhist-style funeral service was held in Cambodia for him. This is fitting, since Chris expressed a strong interest in Buddhism and wished to visit Tibet.

Chris and I both looked forward to the end of this last stint as an aerial survey operator when he could actively pursue photography, writing and adventuring. In October, we planned to head out on an expedition to the South Patagonia ice cap. I was to line up expedition sponsorship; Chris would be taking the photographs that would bring in the money to finance the trip. Chris had experience in this area from time spent on the Juneau Ice Field. If the expedition lived up to expectations, Chris was going to "hit the road" with a slide show and so establish his credentials as an adventure photographer. It was hoped this would generate support for some even grander scheme. For my part, I would come up with map of the ice cap for skiers and climbers.

I find it difficult to go ahead with the trip now that my climbing partner of nearly ten years won't be coming. All expedition plans are currently on hold. With information provided by Chris, I made several first drafts of the map for an industry trade show but put off sending them until I could see him. I wanted to explain the method behind my madness in person. His approval meant much to me.

Chris was fortunate to travel widely and live life to its fullest in his 26 years as a climber, a Peace Corps volunteer, and a person with an itch to roam. Graduating from the University of Washington in physics, Chris volunteered for the Peace Corps in Swaziland. It was a time filled with adventure, grief, anger and insight. Teaching science in a middle school, he did

his best to instruct his students with only the most basic materials on hand in an African village. Back in the States, Chris spoke of his distress at the disregard for human rights he had witnessed in the school where he taught, in the village, and on his travels. He said his ideal job would be to work for human rights at an international level against violence, injustice, and oppression.

His tour over, Chris took advantage of the Peace Corps perk—a six–week vacation. Truly a travelers dream, Chris set out to explore all of southern Africa. He wrote, "I can't tell you how good it feels to be on the road with unlimited time and money." With a friend, Chris was on an trans–Africa/Asia bicycling trip when someone stole their bikes at a campground in South Africa. Undaunted, and in some ways even pleased to be free of the burden of bikes and all gear, Chris teamed up with a Swedish sailor he met in Cape Town for a 75–day sailing adventure. What with the size of the crew (2 sailors) and the condition of the Swede (permanently pickled), Chris ended up running much of the show.

In August of 1995, he returned to Colorado just in time to attend my wedding, a great reunion for both of us after nearly 3 years. Never at ease with proper introductions and formal occasions, Chris managed to introduce himself to my wife, Sarah, during our rehearsal dinner in the middle of a Rocky Mountain thunderstorm while the two of them sought shelter under a wooden table in a thicket of willows.

Chris did not need or want a lot of possessions—a couple of large duffels and a box or two stored in Colorado held all his worldly possessions. He never bought into the corporate "millitary-industrial-entertainment complex" (as we enjoyed calling most of American society). He found mountain climbing in general too cumbersome and commercial and climbed with the bare bones in gear, just enough equipment to get the job done. For him, the ideal trip was done in the spirit of 1940's and 50's adventurers, particularly Eric Shipton and Bill Tilman.

Chris was an anti–consumerist but not a Luddite. I had him talked into some new tele–gear and some light and costly camping equipment for the South Patagonian Ice Cap ski traverse. He was fascinated with the new technology we considered for our trip: global satellite e–mail, EPIRB locator beacons, and hand–held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) receivers. GPS would change the way people navigated around the planet. Now a person could travel overland in a direct route between known landmarks, whatever the weather conditions. A GPS would be a reassuring device to have at sea or on a long cross–country hike, and we were convinced that with GPS, we could push ourselves to the limit on a long traverse in Patagonia.

Chris's Cessna Caravan was equipped with advanced GPS instruments when it crashed into the side of that mountain in Cambodia. Chris operated these systems plus a very complicated array of gravity magnetic sensing electronics. Many of us knew Chris as a survivor with a cool head in tough situations—an extraordinarily competent man. The irony of his death is that he was at the mercy of technology, flying in a small plane in the darkness of night over a triple–canopy forest, when he went down. When he had nothing to depend upon but himself, climbing or sailing or skiing, Chris always came back.

We had done some ice climbing over the fall of 1995 in Ouray, Colorado—good stiff leads up vertical waterfalls that pushed us to the edge. Chris was the best "off-the-couch" ice climber I ever met. He would walk up to the bottom of a trembling, gurgling mass of frozen water and, mechanically placing protection every 12 feet, would be at the top before you knew it. "Competent" is the best way to describe his style of climbing. During these trips, we debated whether to climb Pumori in Nepal or to go to my beloved Andes for our next big adventure. I had climbed about 20 big Andean mountains. During my Peace Corps tour in Bolivia, I had tortured Chris in Swaziland with my mountaineering photos and stories. It was high time to show him some Andean beauty and *hoja de coca*. Sarah and I convinced him to meet us in South America this year and promised a Himalayan trip later on. Chris never did get to Nepal.

We decided to meet in the Cordillera Blanca. Chris arrived in South America before us and, by the time we linked up in the Lima Airport, he had already explored Ecuador extensively and learned quite a bit of Spanish. South America seemed to revive Chris. He recognized a hope among the Andean people which restored his faith in humanity. In all, we spent a month in the mountains, climbing the snowy peaks, playing on the ice, and slogging up endless moraines—six friends, all experienced mountaineers, climbing some 20,000 ft summits in the stunning Laguna Paron valley of the Cordillera Blanca. We had some partner mismatches, inevitable in a group that size, and I wasn't paired with Chris anymore. We were both frustrated knowing that together we could climb any peak in that valley if we had enough snow pickets. On Pisco Oeste, lacking a partner the morning Chris was ready to summit, he soloed. I waited at the bivouac, picking up trash left behind by the all-star Slovenian team, while he negotiated a 70-degree loose rock band at 18,000 ft en route to the beautiful summit. When he descended, he was touched that I had waited all day to greet him with warmth, food, and water, instead of going down to base–camp. This led to a conversation about planning a huge trip while we hiked the long trail down the moraine.

After climbing that summer, I encouraged Chris to travel through Bolivia, visiting the places Sarah and I lived and worked. The Salar de Uyuni, Lagunas Verde and Colorado, and San Pedro de Atacama instilled a sense of wonder. The mighty Atacama with its other-worldly, high-altitude panora-

mas awed Chris unlike any other place, he told me later.

Chris and I felt a stronger bond after that trip to South America. "I can't wait to do another trip with you," he wrote on a postcard from Chile and added, "I may have a job with the SAEC in Lima! I've decided that I really want it, but of course don't have it. The story of my life. Stanzi, we must get one of those BIG expedition patches for our next trip like those burly German climbers we saw in Huaraz. (signed) Günter, aka Chris."

Later that summer, Chris arrives. It's off for some fun desert rock climbs. We pick a soft sandstone spire around Sedona, Arizona, one with a vortex on top of it for charging up your New Age crystals. When Chris' turn to lead comes up, it's a "traverse" pitch. Traversing is something mountaineers hate to do, mainly because they're not gaining altitude while doing it. I planned it this way. It is only 5.6 and Chris is really solid at that level, especially when it's nearly dark out. Chris leads out unprotected by anything save rusty pitons to the right 20 feet, now 40 feet, 300 feet of air below his tiptoes and feeling like a cornered animal ready to fall. He instinctively bolts twelve feet up a difficult loose section toward easy ground that to me, following, looks impossibly overhanging. I tell him there is another piton around the corner and that the route is actually further to the right. I realized that Chris has strength and agility few possess.

The three of us top out just as the street lights of Sedona are coming on below. As the sun sets, the energy of the vortex races across the goosebumps on our arms. I planned it like that because there is only a single rappel to the ground, an easy descent for sure. Sarah and I have done this route before, but we let Chris rappel first. Down into the dark, off three slings around the summit block, there's a big overhang 15 feet in front of you. An inquisitive voice asks, "Ah, are there any ledges or anything I can get onto?"

"What's that Chris? You're almost down, right? Chris? Günter, what's up?"

"Um, I think there might be a knot in the rope." Some frightening minutes of tugging on the webbing, sandstone chunks breaking off the anchor, gusts of dry, cool rim country wind and finally, we're relieved to hear "I'm down."

That beer never tasted better. Talk of future desert rock climbs lasted far into evening. It would be our last climb and one I will never forget. Chris was at his best, relaxed, strong, optimistic about working in Lima, happy, and full of plans for the future.

We will all miss you Chris. It takes faith and courage to go on, to go back to the mountains, to face the inequality in our world. I pray that the Buddhist ceremony performed for you in Cambodia released your spirit intact. I know that when I am high in the mountains, on some dazzling glacier, I will feel your energy propelling me upward to the summit. Your ideals and belief in human rights are an inspiration to those working to make the world a better place, to those freeing themselves from a materialistic life. You've shown us that it is possible to live our dreams.

Que te vaya, muy bien amigo.

A Chris Cochran Memorial Fund is being established. All those wishing to make a contribution to this fund can send their donation to the SAEC Ithaca office.

Eric, who knew Chris in Lima: "Chris taught me a lot about the value of doing what one loves instead of what's expected ...Chris did more living during his too–short life than most people do with three times as long. I feel very lucky to have known him."

Elizabeth, who worked with Chris in Lima: "[Chris] graced the lives of those who knew him."

Don Montague of the South American Explorers Club, on Chris's story of Slovenian climbers: "In any event, a well–told tale by one with a whimsical sense of humor, a shrewd eye for detail, and a near total recall of the absurd." With regard to the work Chris did in the Lima office : "He did all this and much more, and with the best of humor and with an engaging modesty about what he was accomplishing."

Melanie, SAEC Latin American Represenative: "Chris brought some very well thought out suggestions to our staff meeting in Quito and I can't say enough about how grand of a contribution he has made for our organization."

Andrew, in the Lima Clubhouse: "In the brief time we worked together here, we were touched by Chris's genuine warmth and friendliness for people; his enthusiasm for life. He was a very easy guy to like and many people here in Lima did."

George, a fellow climber he met in Huaraz: "On Huascaran, his legs were indomitable and he seemed to be breathing something entirely different than what we were desperately sucking. His vast zeal for Peruvian tuna at 19,000 feet was frightening. His easy going manner and pleasant personality made his strength more precious...I am glad to have shared those mountains with him; each was deserving and complimentary of the other. I suppose I cannot think of a higher compliment. Our world will be less rich without 'Günter.'"

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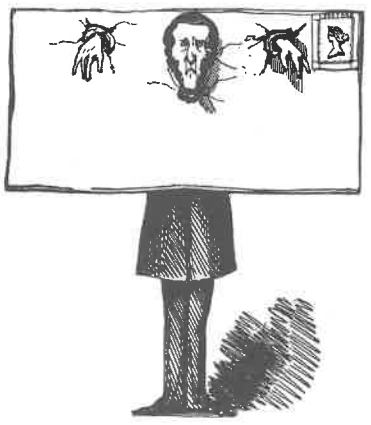

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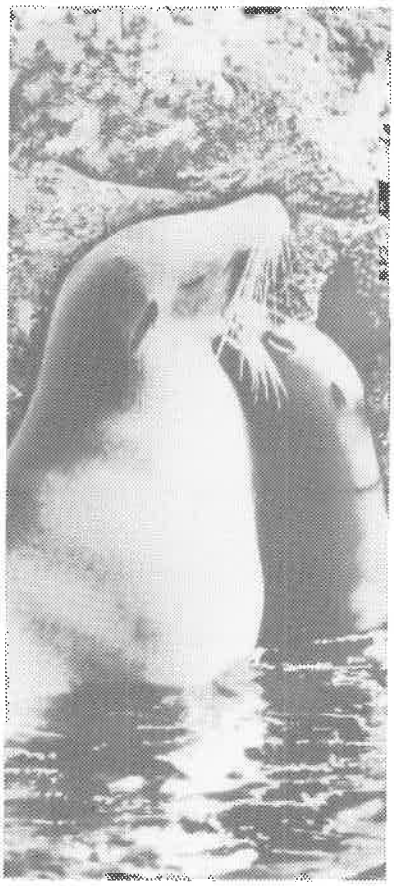

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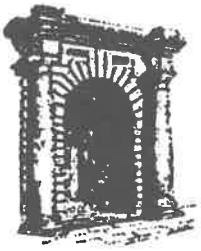

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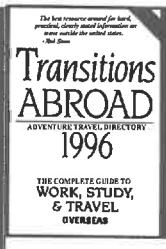

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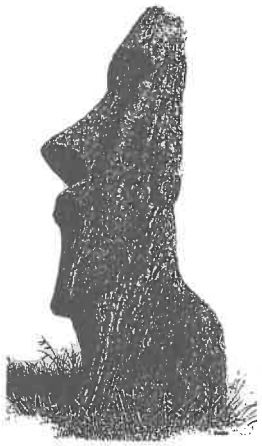

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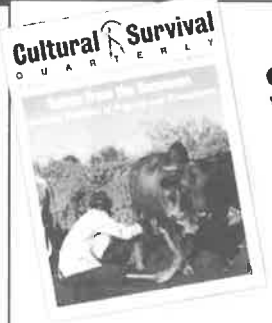

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AN ECO–ALERT

A favorite natural wonder in northern Chile is the geyser field of El Tatio II. In early 1997, I joined a number of tourists leaving nearby San Pedro in packed mini–vans. We arrived early in the morning, but instead of parking on the fringes, the vehicles plowed straight across the flats and onto the geyser field itself. Motorcyclists tore recklessly through the area. Nothing prevented visitors from walking right up to the steam holes—an exceedingly dangerous practice, since the ground is unstable and the steam can reach 600 degrees Celsius.

With all the vehicles parked on the geyser field, a trip to El Tatio II is like visiting a steaming parking lot.

Legislation to establish El Tatio II as a National Park is pending. Until then, the alarming situation persists. In the words of one tour operator, travel agencies have little interest in establishing safety measures such as parking lots away from the geysers, roped barriers, or footpaths. For one thing, many agencies only operate in high season, from December to March. Others last two or three years, make a profit, then disappear.

El Tatio II is currently managed by CORFO (Corporacion de Fomento) which is attempting to harness the area's geothermal energy. To this end, they have drilled to a depth of more than 1,500 m. So far, however, these efforts have been unsuccessful. Technical reasons such as dissolved sediments clogging the pipes have sent costs skyrocketing. Furthermore, even if it proves feasible to harness energy, no ready customer exists. The nearby Chuquicamata copper mine already meets its energy requirements from plants in Tocopilla and San Pedro.

There is another barrier to El Tatio II's designation as a natural park— its location. The fields border on Argentina, a mountainous area that is currently undergoing an extensive survey for minerals. One or two sulfur deposits have been mined to exhaustion. If additional resources are found, this will hamper attempts to preserve the area as a National Park.

—Jochen Ridder

TILDES (AND MORE) AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Using most English–based word processors to produce accented and special Spanish characters can be a virtual pain. With apologies to heathen Mac users, here are some ways of coping with this in DOS and Windows–based systems.

In Microsoft Word:

–For simple Spanish accents for vowels, type the Control key plus the apostrophe key together, then press your desired vowel. Example: [**CTRL + '**], **a = á.**

–For tildes: [**CTRL+SHIFT+~**], **n = ñ** (To do this, you need to press the **CTRL**, **SHIFT**, and **~** keys together, which requires a Houdini–like move on some laptop keyboards).

–For ¿, press [**CTRL+SHIFT+ ALT+?**]; for ¡, press [**CTRL+SHIFT+ ALT+!**].

–Another way to insert special characters is to go to the main menu bar, pulling down **INSERT**, and clicking on **SYMBOL**. You can also make a shortcut, a combination of keystrokes that insert a designated character, for each frequently used symbol.

–For a complete set of Spanish characters (including additional characters used in Brazilian Portuguese) refer to Word Help Topics, under "International characters."

E–mail has its own problems. Some systems won't show accented characters. Incompatibilities lead to words typed "diseñado" to look like "dise=Flado," even though it looked just fine when you sent it. On the other hand, don't forget the importance of special characters in Spanish: "año" is "year," but "ano" is "anus."

For composing e–mail, you have several options for creating special characters. One is to compose your message on a word processor, then cut and paste it into e–mail. Another is to use the codes for special characters. It's a pain, but it's useful. Hold down ALT, then press the code numbers one at a time:

ALT+0225=á
ALT+0233=é
ALT+0237=í
ALT+0243=ó
ALT+0250=ú
ALT+0252=ü
ALT+0191=¿
ALT+0161=¡
ALT+0241=ñ

Globalink's Spanish Assistant for DOS with WordPerfect 5.1. is a $50 to $60 bidirectional translator. Using it with a DOS-based word processor is worth the price. Among other things, you can type Spanish characters, get the Spanish versions of English words (and translate Spanish to English, too) and conjugate Spanish verbs.

To get Spanish Assistant, contact your usual software distributors or Globalink, Inc., 9302 Lee Highway, 12th Floor, Fairfax, VA 22031. Phone: (800) 255–5600. E–mail: thelink@globalink.com. Website: www. globalink.com

—Robert Runyard

CHE FOR A DAY

Are you intrigued by insurrections? Are you a cheerleader for Che? Gaga about Guevara? Then check out La Ruta del Che, the very latest in hip theme tours (*see map*). It's simple. For only $2200 including airfare, RebelTours will fly you to Bolivia where you can breathe the air of freedom and walk in the footsteps of your favorite guerilla. You pick up your group in Miami, where your smoke-wreathed tour leader, Fidel, hands you a cheroot (Cohiba, of course), a beret, a copy of *Das Kapital*, some fatigues, combat boots, your own personal Kalishnikov, a couple of clips of ammo, a grenade or two, and then you and your fellow rebels are off for ten action-packed days of winning over the hearts and minds of the Altiplano peasant.

Just kidding, of course.

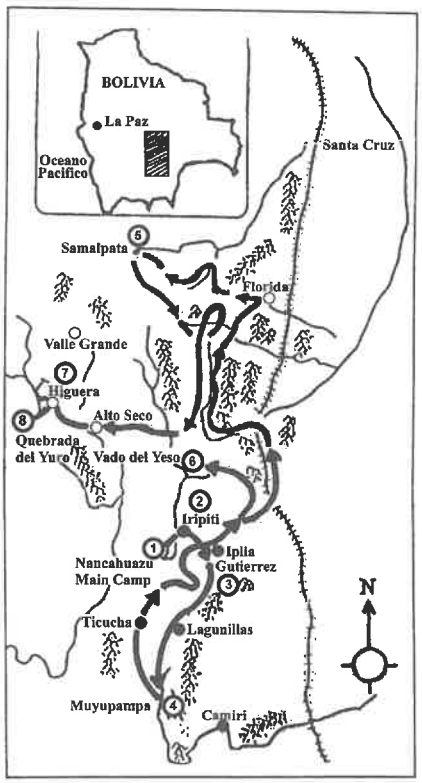
Not about La Ruta del Che, however. Believe it. Bolivian tourist agencies are touting package tours to remote jungle areas where the Argentine-Cuban revolutionary and his comrades waged mortal combat with the Bolivian Army.

The Bolivian Tourism Secretariat announced that Che tours will cover the countryside around the towns and villages where Guevara conducted his revolutionary activities. An 815–kilometer circuit will commemorate the guerrilla leader's 1967 struggle against the Bolivian government. La Ruta del Che can be trekked in four days and five nights, passing through the communities of Ñanchauazú and Camirio, to famous skirmish sites like Muyupampa and Vado del Yeso, and finally to La Higuera where he was captured and executed after uttering, "Shoot, coward, you are only going to kill a man." Bonus: You get to visit the hospital in Vallegrande where Guevara's corpse was displayed for the last time.

La Ruta del Che gives new meaning to the battle cry *¡Che vive!*

LARIAM CONTROVERSY

Malaria-carrying mosquitos aren't the only thing to worry about; now researchers are questioning the safety of mefloquine, or Lariam, the antimalarial drug recommended by the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC). A small percentage of travelers contend that the drug causes nightmarish side effects, including hallucinations, anxiety attacks, seizures, and severe mood swings.



An August 27, 1996 report about Lariam in the *British Medical Journal* disclosed a 1 in 40 incidence of psychological side effects. Also, the manufacturer, Roche, has expanded its British product data sheets. They now list cardiac, respiratory, circulatory, reproductive tract, and nervous-system problems among the side effects. Roche concedes that as many as 22 percent of users complain of nausea and vomiting.

However, the CDC claims that Lariam's increasingly negative reputation is "anecdotal" and that there is "no pattern of [psychiatric reactions] linked to the drug." Roche reports a mere 1 in 10,000 rate for such "neuropsychiatric side effects" as convulsions, hallucinations, and depression. As a precaution, Lariam should not be taken by those with a history of psychiatric problems or epilepsy. Researchers do suggest that the risk of side effects is magnified by dehydration and alcohol use.

A combination of chloroquine and proguanil has been recommended in England as a safer alternative. However, their effectiveness is rated at only 65 percent, as compared to 95 percent for Lariam. Ultimately, taking any drug is a question of balancing the benefits and the risks. Malaria is a serious and potentially lethal disease, whereas Lariam's side effects are survivable.

Whichever antimalarial drug you take, don't forget that it is still vital to prevent mosquito bites whenever possible. Use insect repellent and mosquito nets. Protecting yourself from bites cuts the risk of malaria by 90 percent.

For more advice about Lariam, call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 404–332–4555. For more information about the Lariam controversy, contact Lariam Action–United States, 443 Tennessee Lane, Palo Alto, CA 94306 or LariamUSA@aol. com.

Visiting Torres del Paine, Chile?
Consider Robert Runyard's suggestions:

- Even though you were taught that Chilean cowboys were called *huasos*, don't say that in the Torres del Paine area. Some ranch workers consider it demeaning. They identify with their *gaucho* brethren and many prefer to be called just that: *gauchos*.
- While not pristine, the park *is* remote. You cannot rely on the bus services to and from the park; you could get stranded at any point.
- Several trekkers have disappeared while hiking the circuit.
- There are mountain lions in the park. They have become quite bold since hunting them has been stopped. Whether or not they have anything to do with the disappearance of the occasional trekker is left to your own perception of immortality, but remember: 1) Mountain lions do eat people, and 2) The Chilean park rangers that patrol the circuit consist of not less than three.
- If you are considering other adventure travel or a place to stay in the Patagonia area (or a place to stay in Punta Arenas), check out Turismo Aonikenk at http://www.fcmr.com/austro/aonikenk/.

Terry Larson offers these tips about Merida, Venezuela:

- The *teleferico* is running again at last. It now runs to all but the last level. They have upped the price of the *teleferico* to 7,5000 Bs. The lines are really short, so short that they often wait until they have a minimum of 15 people before leaving.
- There are now four airlines flying to Merida. One of them flies directly from Aruba (Santa Barbara Air). It looks like Avensa has a little bit of competition there.
- Prices in Merida have doubled or tripled from last year. Gasoline prices have quadrupled, but it's still a good deal at about 50 cents a gallon.

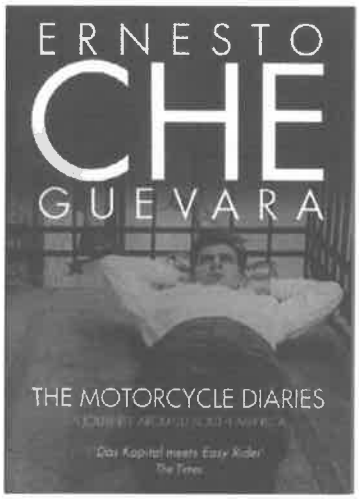
Do you have any tips that would help your fellow Member save time, money, or face? Send them to us. We'll publish them and give you credit–promise.

The Motorcycle Diaries
Ernesto Che Guevara

London/New York: Verso, 1996. 156 pages, paperback. $11.00

Last February, the Bolivian ministry of tourism announced the opening of La Ruta del Che, a tourist circuit that traces the Argentine-born, Cuban-backed guerrilla leader's footsteps during his skirmishes with the Bolivian army in Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca in 1967, skirmishes that ultimately led to his capture and murder.

Turning a revolutionary icon into a tourist attraction might seem sacrilegious, but before Ernesto Guevera was a revolutionary, before he was Che, he was himself a tourist. In 1950, at age 22, he sputtered some 4,000 miles around northern Argentina on a moped. The following year, he and friend Alberto Granado mounted "La Poderosa," a Norton 500, and roared off on what would be a nine-month adventure that took them to southern Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela. Che finished the trip solo, in Miami.



Before Che and Albert were out of Chile, the Norton collapsed, the victim of one spin-out too many. The pair slogged onward by foot, truck, boat, bus—and the occasional plane. Che kept a diary, which appeared first in Italian in 1993 and now in English.

The young Che of these diary pages is at once rambunctious and pensive, insightful and impressionable. He exhibits Marxist flashes, Karl and Groucho, with a dash of Zeppo (the lady's Marx). For example, the ill-treatment of the copper miners at Chuquicamata inflames Che, although he shrewdly observes that the dispute over the future of the mine is between "a coalition of nationalist and left-wing groupings which advocate nationalizing the mines, and those who, in the cause of free enterprise, prefer a well-run mine (even in foreign hands) to possibly less efficient management by the state."

Although Che's budding political sensibilities are on display, his diary is more about a pair of Argentine twenty-somethings living the antic life of the road: They drink, cadge meals, brawl, get sick (Che has an acrobatic experience crapping out a window), finagle beds, play soccer, hitch rides, pursue women (Che is, in turn, pursued by one lady's husband), and run out on bills. They are routinely befriended by, of all people, small town police.

Often down to their last peso, Che and Alberto haul furniture, fight fires, and volunteer in hospitals and leprosariums. They quickly learn the tricks of the professional vagabond: When you enter a bar, announce that it is your birthday. If offered a drink, you decline explaining that it is the custom of your country to only drink with food—your host will promptly order you a meal.

Near the start of the journey, Che falls in love with northern Patagonia: "Maybe one day when I'm tired of wandering, I'll come back to Argentina and settle in the Andean lakes district." If he had returned, he would now be nearly 70, a black beret crowning his long white hair as he cast for trout in a cold stream above San Martín de los Andes.

—Daniel Buck

Far Away and Long Ago
William Henry Hudson

New York: Lyons and Burford, 1997. 332 pages. $14.95

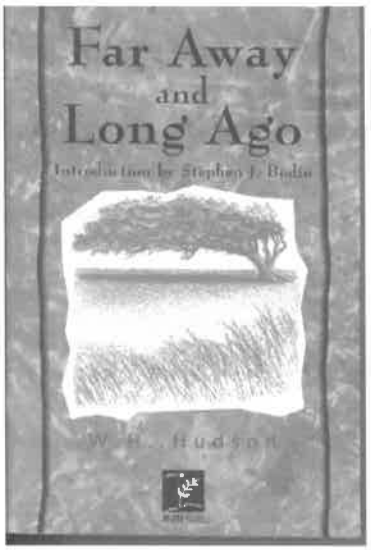
The title of this memoir by the nineteenth-century naturalist William Henry Hudson (1841–1922) demands we notice the immediacy of the events it memorializes. The conceit is that Hudson, grown old and sick in bed, is blessed with a sudden vision of his first fifteen years. These years on the pampas of Argentina as the child of American emigrants come marvelously alive in his memoir.

Hudson portrays the people—native and European, prosperous and poor—and the practices of nineteenth-century Argentine society in graceful and historically accurate detail. But *Far Away and Long Ago*, like the best autobiographies, transcends its historical relevance and ends up saying as much about mankind's relationship to the world and about life itself as it does about Hudson in Argentina.

Hudson crafts, in resplendent detail, the sounds, sights, and emotions of his early years. We meet his brothers, schoolmasters, and neighbors, along with the lyrical portraits of

birds, snakes, dogs, trees, and flowers that reveal his fascination with natural history. *Far Away and Long Ago is* natural history, at its most accessible and moving. We drink in the sensuous stories, an enchanting and deceptively simple blend of specificity and universality. Reading this memoir, one is occasionally and delightedly reminded that all of it actually happened. We share Hudson's wistfulness as he evokes the purity of childhood emotions, as well as the difficult awakening of consciousness that signals childhood's end. And not all the memories are idyllic; we find sorrow and violence to be part of life in this wild land.

However insistently Hudson claims these reveries are random,



they are clearly formative milestones—strikings of awe, times of humor, grips of fear, pangs of loss, and surges of joy. From "The Singular Ombú Tree" to "Rebuked by a Gaucho" to "Feeling with Regard to Flowers," Hudson's memories are fruits of a rich life, and we get an exquisite picture of growing up. Although this is cast as a childhood memoir, we discern the keenest sense of the man.

—Margaret Koehler

Living Poor
Moritz Thomsen

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997. 280 pages, paperback. $17.95

Moritz Thomsen was a 48–year old, World War II bomber–plane veteran who tired of farming in California's Sacramento Valley. One day in 1965, he up and joined the Peace Corps. Those were the early, heady days when Americans young and old, lettered and unlettered, thronged the corps. Thomsen was stationed in Rio Verde, near Esmeraldas on Ecuador's northern Pacific coast. For several years, he inveigled, shamed, hectored, and inspired the residents of Rio Verde to organize a series of cooperatives: Chicken and hog-breeding projects (in Peace Corps lingo, almost everything is called a project), a vegetable garden, a farm, a store, and a fishing boat. To one degree or another, all the co-ops failed. Yet each one changed a few lives for the better, albeit temporarily.

The more successful beneficiaries of Thomsen's projects had to put up with backbiting from resentful neighbors. This was one of the cruel awakenings Thomsen experienced during his volunteer service.

If Thomsen was a caricature of the well-intentioned American abroad floundering in a strange culture, at least he was the cartoonist. His sketch pad was *Living Poor*, a memoir (originally published in 1969) of his exasperating years in Ecuador. Paul Theroux rightly called it "the best book I have yet read on the Peace Corps experience."

In addition to serving as the co-op preacher, Thomsen became a one-man bank, lending his neighbors money in drips and drabs out of his meager $100-a-month volunteer stipend and sporadic contributions from home. The impoverished families of RRo Verde used the loans, often as small as 25 cents, to meet daily emergencies: Medicine for sick children, corn for hungry chickens, or cane alcohol for celebrations. With episodic lending he waged his own war on poverty, a personal fight against "living poor," which Thomsen described as "like being sentenced to exist in a stormy sea in a battered canoe, requiring all your strength simply to keep afloat; there is never any question of reaching a destination."

Thomsen is a gifted writer, his prose uncluttered. The portraits of his friends and enemies (often one and the same) in Rio Verde are vivid. In the hands of a lesser talent, this tale—one reviewer said "Horatio Alger would never have made it in Rio Verde"—would be unbearable. Thomsen pulls the reader into the fray, rooting for his dream even though the outcome is all but certain.

Like some Peace Corps Volunteers, Thomsen grew away from his own culture. After a brief stay in the United States, he returned to Ecuador to run a farm and died in Guayaquil in 1991. He wrote three other books: *The Farm on the River of Emeralds* (1978), *The Saddest Pleasure* (1990), and *My Two Wars* (1996), published posthumously.

—Daniel Buck

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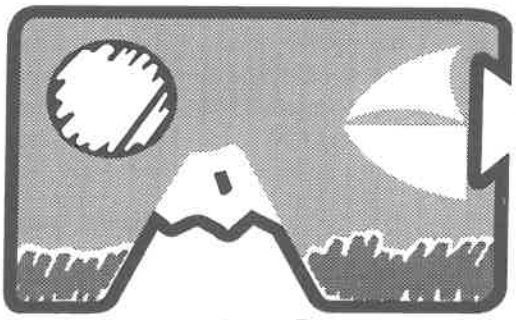

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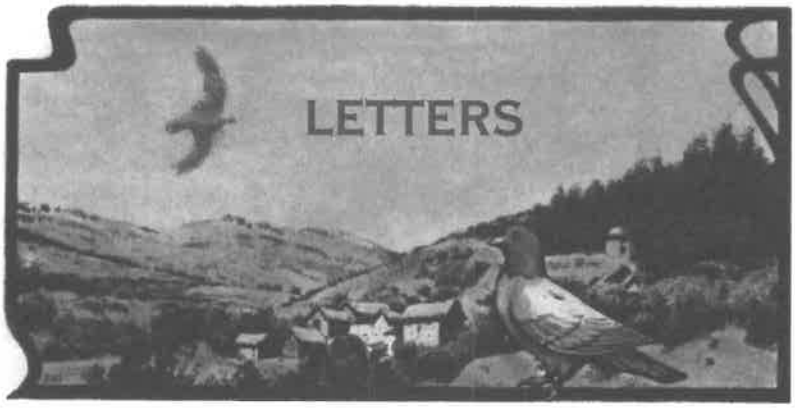


Dear Editor,

This has got to be the greatest club I've ever heard of! I consider myself to be a sort of amateur anthropologist, and the *South American Explorer* gives me the opportunity to get a "man on the street" view of many South American customs that are covered in no other publication available to me. I just finished reading issue #48. I have to say that my favorite story was "Ecuador, Mi Amor" by Jon Loomis, followed closely by "A Taste of Salvador."

I am currently taking 15 units of college coursework through a university that offers correspondence work at a discount to prisoners. I hope that, by the time I am out of prison in four years and off parole, I will be able to go to some of the places written about in your magazine as part of my doctoral studies. On the other hand, if it doesn't work out that such a high falutin' destiny awaits me, I'm also learning how to weld. I can save up money during parole to finance extended travels in South America.

Do you think any other Members would be willing to trade letters describing their adventures for a four–leaf clover? I'm thinking of something along the lines of "Armchair Anthropologist will trade lucky four–leaf clovers for descriptions & photos of South American places/people you've encountered. Michael Harper, Box 409000—H89880, Ione, CA 95640."

I have been picking four–leaf clovers so much that I've got them coming out of my ears now, so I am sending along some for you to have (if they make it past the mailroom, which I know has rules against green leafy substances coming *into* prison, but I'm not sure about the status going out!).

Anyway, I thank you for the great magazines, and I hope you enjoy the four–leaf clovers (which I am led to believe are plentiful naturally and that their overabundance here has nothing to do with our proximity to Rancho Seco Nuclear Power Plant. Anybody got a geiger counter handy?).

Sincerely,

Michael Harper

To the South American Explorer Editors, Ithaca, NY 14850,

(Ithaca? Sounds familiar, like a historical name...somewhat related to the Odyssey...wasn't that the city where Odysseus was born...or lived? I don't have an encyclopaedia, so I can't check it out right now.)

Hi, everybody! Thank you for reminding me of your existence. I'm going to have my 73rd birthday on July 5th, and I decided to renew my acquaintance with you as my own birthday gift. I remember the good times I used to spend reading your publications. I always smiled as I read, and lots of times I laughed outright! Some of your writers reminded me of those in *MAD Magazine* ...consider that a compliment.

I saved the article on Jewish gauchos, made smaller copies of it, and sent them to my Jewish friends...a great success! I also bought tapes of folklore music from you, which were greatly appreciated by those who play flutes or guitars. For me, I bought two shawls and sewed them together as a kind of vest, which was quite admired.

When I bought Federico Kirbus' book, I wrote to him in Argentina, and we became pen pals. Eventually, I had that book sent to my relatives and friends in Argentina. Everybody enjoyed it. After that, I bought all of his books.

I've never had enough money to go on those excursions. Now I don't have the agility. Still, the *SAE* always gave me pertinent information to daydream correctly!

Also, I was forgetting a lot about my Argentine heritage. So I bought Gerry Leitner's *Travel Companion to Argentina*. For me, it was 847 pages of memories: maps of the provinces, accurate maps of the towns...I "visited," with tears running down my face, my own home town of Rosario de Santa Fe. If I could ever afford going back there, I know have a reliable guide (I've already lived here in the U.S. for 40 years).

Thank you, everybody, for contacting me!

Very sincerely, a fan!

Susana M. Gracia

P.S. Yes! 1. Ithaca was the legendary home of Odysseus, on one of the Ionian Islands, off the West Coast of Greece. 2. A city in west central New York, on Cayuga Lake, pop. 26,000. Why did you move there? Lower taxes? It is *cold* there, brrrr!

Dear Editor,

With everything going on down here between Chris, and too many work–related issues, I hadn't been able to thank you for such a nice play on the MRTA article in the *South American Explorer*. I thought it came out very nicely and I appreciate your patience and help.

It was very sad to look it over in the context of the terrible news about Chris: He was involved in several stages of the piece. His death effected me more than I could have guessed, and it still saddens me to think about it. The one–page letter I started writing to Chris' parents turned into three, and all the sadness came rushing back again at the mass held for Chris at the Club on Saturday.

I don't know what the protocol for these kinds of incidents is, but I wanted to suggest naming the library in the Lima Clubhouse after Chris. It is much, much more organized and accessible than before, and it seems like it would be a thoughtful gesture that would help symbolize the vast improvements made at the Clubhouse in his short tenure. It wouldn't be very difficult (I guess it would just involve getting a plaque and someone to put it up). I'll volunteer to pay for the plaque to save on the costs, just so long as it doesn't go against any policy of the club. Let me know.

Yours,

Eric J. Lyman
Lima, Peru

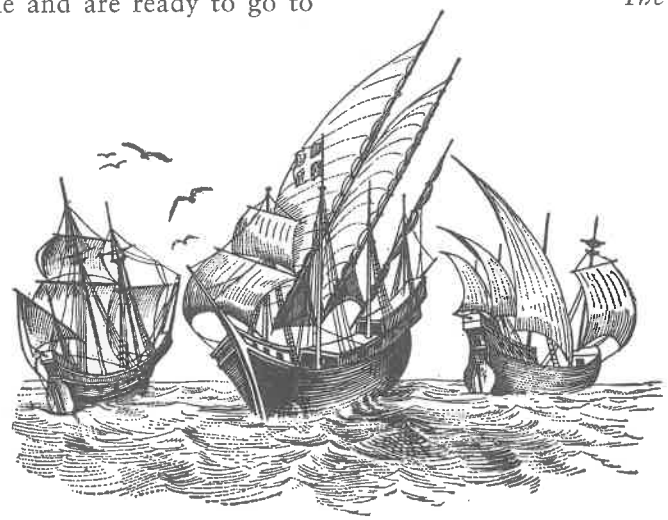
Dear Readers,

It's not the first time. Other publications face the same problem now and then. Hey, it's bound to happen sooner or letter. You wrap up the magazine and are ready to go to press, and lo!—you've got a hole in your "Letters to the Editor" section. What to do?

Well, you can always go the fake letter route, which is what we've been reduced to, but the truth is, it just so happens we actually had a letter (of the right length, too) from a couple in New Jersey. This pair slammed one of our articles (the Loomis piece) but, strange to say, it just up and disappeared. We think a sinister force might be at work since, for weeks before publication, it showed up all over the office: scattered across the keyboards, wedged in between the fax and the tea cozy, crumpled under the compost bucket, carelessly strewn atop the sushi. We mean it—it just wouldn't go away. Then, just when we needed it—gone.

It wasn't like this in the old days. Members used to write us all the time. Not a day went by without some pithy and riveting epistle. We always had a whole pile to choose from. Alas, no more. Has the readership grown slack, sluggish, *torpid*? We can't remember when last we really got excited about a letter to the editor. But you're reading this. Are you literate? Then do us a favor—surprise us. That couple in New Jersey tried, but as I've said, we lost their letter. Next time, we'll be more careful.

The Editors



THE SAEC IN CYBERSPACE

WHAT'S NEW IN CLUB CYBERSPACE?

You're asking us? Well for starters, have you seen our eye–popping, teeth–sucking, neo–techno–trance Club Zine; our high–fidelity audio Trip Reports that, at a click, talk to you in eight voices ranging from gravelly shoot–from–the–hip man–to–man to an effervescent just–between–us–girls chatter; our multi-cultural web language pages in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese (Mandarin), and Quechua (with Urdu expected in September); and our very popular CU–See Me option for interacting with the Club staff? How about our Members-only Chat Room and virtual expedition Trophy Room?

OK, OK—just kidding.

Actually, there's not much new to report about our web page this time around. Of course, on–line trip reports are increasing and we've added more links. Also, we've had nearly 20,000 visits the Club web page including, unfortunately, hourly hits by the Club staff to look at their pictures.

NEW S. A. SITES ON THE WEB YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT:

TOURISM CONCERN.
http://www.oneworld.org/tourconcern/
Click here if you're concerned about the impact of tourism on communities and the environment. Looking for constructive answers to uncontrolled and insensitive tourism? This is for you.

THE ECOTRAVEL CENTER.
http://www.ecotour.org/
This site describes itself as the most comprehensive resource of ecotravel information available, providing everything you need to self–design exciting travel experiences that benefit conservation and provide opportunities for local communities.

ANDEAN BOTANICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
Http://home-page.interaccess.com/~mddillon/abis/
Into vertebrates? Invertebrates? This isn't the site for you. It's about botany. You know... chlorophyll, chloroplasts, cell walls, cellulose, bark, leaves, roots, and stuff. In short, plants. For info on floristic and systematic investigations of the phanerogams (flowering plants) of Andean South America, this is the place to be.

HOSTEL GUIDE TO SOUTH AMERICA.
http://www.hostels.com/hostels/s.america.html
A web site list of hostels throughout South America, complete with Backpacker's Bulletin Board.

THE TAPIR GALLERY.
http://www.tapirback.com/tapirgal/
Still smoking or drinking? Click here for ways to tapir off. Sorry, sorry. This is actually a very nice site with cute pictures of tapirs and their little piggies plus all sorts of useful tapir information and hyperlinks. Prove Patti Nickell wrong who says in ZooLife magazine, "...there has been little affection or reverence for the tapir. With its barrel–shaped body and piglike snout, it's unlikely to ever grace airline posters or travel brochures." Share your feelings about tapirs on Tapir Talk an e–mail forum for professionals and "the seriously interested." Find out about the latest tropical tapir transactions, transitions, translocations, transformations, and trivia on Tapir News. Read about Jerry Garcia's encounter with a tapir in the bathtub.

TRAVEL MESSAGES BULLETIN BOARD.
http://www.weblane.com/experiencia/bb/
Need a place to post and retrieve messages while traveling through South America? Before you leave home, tell your family and friends about the Travel Messages Board. Post and retreive messages here. How? Cyber cafés are springing up in many U.S. and South American cities. Just order a cappuccino, log–on, and space out.

EL NIÑO THEME PAGE.
http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/toga–tao/el–nino/home.html
Everything you wanted to know about El Niño and then some, e.g. El Niño impacts, forecasts, FAQs, and the latest realtime El Niño measurements.

THE FUNKYFISH GUIDE TO ECUADOR.
http://www.qni.com/~mj/
Remember Frank Brand, Quito Clubhouse volunteer a couple of years ago? This is Frank's page. The purpose of the FunkyFish guide is to expand environmental and cultural awareness and to promote conservation. Want to volunteer in Ecuador? Send in your qualifications and FunkyFish will see what it can do to help. More? See FunkyFish hyperlinks for Spanish schools, Hostals/Hotels, the Galapagos, etc.

THE QUIPUS CULTURAL FOUNDATION.
http://www. esperanto.com/Quipus/
Gripped by fears that Bolivia's unique culture is dying out? You'll be glad to know about this non–profit organization to promote and preserve the culture and art of Bolivia's diverse ethnic groups. The Foundation is designing a Museum of Bolivian Arts and Cultures in La Paz and creating interactive theater programs in Sucre for children to learn about the culture of indigenous groups throughout Bolivia. Another objective is to keep alive Bolivian ethnic and popular art, train craftspeople, and open up markets for their art.

CLASSIFIEDS: The rates have changed! See Classified Alert this page. Ads for Issue 50 must be received by September 3, 1997. Send payment with copy.

ARTS/CRAFTS

ARTESANIAS INTI CHUMBI. Sells unique handmade belts, bags, weavings and dolls, all crafted by the Conterón family in whose home one can watch weaving demonstrations. Visit us at the main plaza in Ilumán, 5 km north of Otavalo, Imbabura, Ecuador. (UL)

AMAZON ARTS. High quality imports and Peruvian handicrafts. Specializes in Shipibo. 1318 West 135 Drive, Westminster, CO 80234, Tel: (303) 457-8390. (UL)

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ART. Alpaca rugs, crystals, spheres, amethysts, wholesale only. 2321 NW 66th Ct, Gainesville, FL 32653; Tel: (352) 335-4152 or 1-800-527-4367 (orders only). (49)

SENECA ARTS represents native Latin American naif and primitive painters. Gallery exhibitions and private sales. Opportunity for you to aid unknowns and developing painters. Individuals only. No crafts or tourist art. Send slides/photos and questions to Seneca Arts Inc., 3965 Sedgwick Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10463. (212) 884-8698. (UL)

MAROTI-SHOBO COOPERATIVE. Shipibo & Conibo Indian Art of Peru's Jungle. Traditional Ceramics & Textiles. Write: Maroti-Shobo, Casilla 60, Pucallpa, Peru, or Telex PERU attention tel: 6551. (UL)

ARTE DO BRASIL is a profit-sharing enterprise with a women's cooperative handicraft group in Brazil. Brochure, send long SASE to 7303 23rd NE, Seattle, WA 98115 USA. (UL)

COMPANIONS WANTED

WRITER SEEKS FEMALE (20s, early 30s) with whom to pedal across continents. Mark Laxer, 4431 Lehigh Rd. #221, College Park, MD 20740 em@access.digex.net (49)

I'M 5'5", Blonde, athletic; from Germany originally. Anyone loving the Inca Culture and Andean street children as much as I do could write me: Ruth Olinger, 5069 Amhurst, Colony, TX 75056. (UL)

TRAVELING COMPANION(S) WANTED for tepui climb and visit to Angel Falls in Dec. 97. contact Ric Finch, Box 5062 TTU, Cookeville, TN 38505. e-mail: rcf7332@tntech.edu.

ADVENTUROUS FEMALE "LATINOPHILE" seeks male companion (50+) for travel in South/Central America, anywhere, anytime. Hablo español. Joan Stephens, 3636 S. Alameda, B119, Corpus Christi, TX 78411. (49)

WELL-TRAVELED MALE looking for an independent female to travel in Latin America and elsewhere. Spanish language skills would be helpful. Must be in decent physical condition and under 45 years old. Contact: Roger G. Hunter, 24620 Russell Rd. #F-302, Kent, WA 98032. Tel: 206-854-2545. (49)

CLASSIFIED ALERT

Yes, we've raised the rates for Classified Ads. Before you get huffy, realize that this was the **first rate hike since 1987.**

So, due to rising costs, inflation(okay, you've heard it all before), etc., take note!

The new PER ISSUE rates for all classified ads are:

LIFE MEMBERS: Free first 25 words.

OTHER MEMBERS: $10 first 25 words.

NONMEMBERS: $20 first 25 words.

Each additional word 50¢ .

Note: Email addresses and international phone numbers count as 2 words.

All classifieds currently running will expire with Issue number that appears at the end of the ad, e.g. (49). "Unlimited ads" (UL) will expire with this issue.

Ads for Issue 50 must be prepaid and received by September 3, 1997.

Believe me, we're sorry about this, but not that sorry.

GUIDES

UNIQUE SMALL GROUP TOURS to S.A. and beyond. Peru, Bolivia, Argentina & Venezuela upcoming. Phoenix Antiquities Research, Box 133, Cummington, MA 01026. (413) 634-5400. (UL)

PATAGONIA, a land of adventure. Trekking and expeditions. Contact: Janko Gorse, Monseñor Juan Hladnik 4125, (1826) Remedios de Escalada, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Tel/FAX: (54-1) 202-2890. (UL)

VASCO TOURS TRAVEL AGENCY offers specialized tours to the Ecuador jungle, trekking in Llanganates Mountains, national parks, rivers, lagoons, horse tours and trips into the protected rain forest "Venecia," with the Vasco Bros. and Juan Medina, guides; Recommended by SA Handbook. For more info—PO Box 18-02-1970 Baños, Ecuador. Tel/FAX: 593-3-740-017. (UL)

HOTELS, LODGING

FOR RENT: Room(s) w/own bathroom for rent in spacious home. Live with a Peruvian family while visiting. English/Quechua spoken. Access to kitchen. Centrally located in Lima, still away from hustle. Single rate: $25/day, $250/month. Tel: 011-511-476587. (51)

QUITO. WOMEN'S HOSTAL Eva Luna. $5.00/night. Kitchen and laundry. Quiet and secure. Central Amazonas area. Contact Safari. Tel: 5932 2 234779 or PO Box 17-11-6060, Quito. We hold mail. (49)

HACIENDA SAN AGUSTIN DE CALLO. Invaded by Incas, ravaged by conquistadors, missed by tourists. This unique Incan hacienda (one of only two Incan sites in Ecuador) situated at the base of Cotopaxi offers the discerning traveller an unrivalled glimpse into Ecuador's rich and colorful past. There are five exquisitely furnished rooms. Activities such as horse riding, trout fishing, biking and hiking in and around Cotopaxi National Park are available. Day visits are possible, with lunch / snacks. Reservations / Information: Tel/Fax: 593-2-503-656 or 593-9-727-568. Web page: http://www.qni.com/wmj/agustin/agustin.html (UL)

FAMILY STAY IN QUITO--Young, English-speaking family welcomes you and offers comfortable, quiet, friendly atmosphere with personal attention. Tel: 593-2-225-629.

See you at CASA MOJANDA! Ecological retreat only a ten minute drive from Otavalo, Ecuador. Cozy adobe cottages have spectacular panoramic views of the Andes, private baths and terraced gardens. Wonderful hiking, biking and horseback riding trails to waterfall, Mojanda Lakes and cloud forest; gourmet home-cooked meals; Andean music and dancing; organic gardens; English and Spanish library; salsa classes. We are a family owned and operated business. For reservations, tel or

fax 593-9-731737. If no answer, fax 593-6-922969 or tel 593-6-921176. Email: mojanda@uio.telconet.net (UL)

HUANCAYO, PERU. Guest house: Family Pension Huanca. Quiet, safe, local info available, good meeting place, very clean with hot showers. Typical meals at reasonable prices offered. Secure luggage deposit. 10 minute walk from downtown. Address: Pasaje San Antonio 113, San Carlos (Cross St. is 4th block of Av. Uruguay. Tel: 064-223-956. (49)

IN QUITO ECUADOR Visit Hostal "Mi Casa" Bed & Breakfast located in a residential neighborhood. Stay in your own pied a terre. We offer our guests comfort, charm and privacy. Mi Casa also organizes unique tours in Ecuador. Call: Marcia Correa (593-2) 560-387/509-328. E-mail: Agrotech@UIO.catnet.net. Address: Psje Gangotena 127 y Isabel La Catolica, Quito, Ecuador. (51)

GOING TO CUSCO? Stay at Hotel Colonial Palace Inn. Reviving 5 centuries of history in these colonial buildings with two beautiful colonial gardens; good rates, good service, rooms with private bathroom, telephone, HOT WATER, and carpeted. SAEC members receive 10% discount. Only one block from the main square. Reservations (5184) 232-151. Fax (5184) 232-329. (49)

IN LIMA we are your best option. La Posada del Parque. We invite you to know us. A picturesque grand mansion in Peruvian style, with art deco bathrooms, exclusive, safe, clean and attended by the owner. Rooms from US$20. Singles, doubles and suites available. Call us for reservations: 51-1-433-2412, or fax: 51-1-432-3011. Parque Hernan Velarde #60, Santa Beatriz, Lima 1. (49)

OTAVALO, ECUADOR. Ali Shungu, Hotel/Restaurant. Hacienda-like setting, 4 blocks from Indian Market, 16 rooms, 2 family apartments. Fireplace, Garden, Patio, Mountain Views, Hummingbirds, Friendly Service. Gourmet Vegetarian & International Meals. Shuttle Bus from Quito, Tour Information, American owned. Call 593-6-920750. Write: Casilla 34, Otavalo. (50)

CAFE CULTURA, QUITO. English owned hotel; beautiful colonial house centrally located in new part of town (Robles y Reina Victoria). 16 bedrooms, all with private bathroom. Logfires/terrace/garden/lots of atmosphere. Cafe serves our infamous special breakfasts and English cream teas. Tel/fax 02-224-271. E-mail: sstevens@pi.pro.ec (51)

SANTIAGO. Stay in home of American living in Chile. Lovely house, spectacular view in hills above smog. Private/shared bath, hot water, pool, phone, garden, breakfast. $25sgl, $30dbl. FAX 00562-242-3052. Phone 00562-215-1979. Los Refugios 17760, 17-B, Santiago 10. (UL)

POSADA DEL SOL, hostal.—XVIII century house located in downtown Cuenca, 12 rooms w/bathroom, water purification system, tourist information. Address: Bolivar 5-03 & Mariano Cueva. Tel: (07) 838 695. E-mail: pdelsol@impsat.net.ec (52)

FAMILY STAY IN QUITO. Dr. Cecilia Rivera, pediatrician, specializing in natural medicines and foods. Salazar 327 y Mallorca. Tel: 548-006 or 569-961. (49)

THE MAGIC BEAN—Restaurant, coffee house and hotel. Great location, comfortable, clean. Close to all the good restaurants and shopping. In the new town. Friendly, helpful American-owned, located at Foch 681 y Juan Leon Mera, Quito. Tel: 566-181. Shared rooms and bath $7 pp, double with private bath $20.(UL)

SAMAIPATA—BOLIVIA, cottages, camping, restaurant, swimming pool, tennis, paddle, etc. Resort located in the foothills of the Andes. Surrounded by beautiful mountains. Near archaeological ruins & largest national park. Prices from $12.00/4-person cottage, camping $1.00/person. Achira Kamping, Casilla 1020, Tel: 591-352-5777, FAX 591-352-2667, Santa Cruz—Bolivia. (UL)

WHEN ON YOUR WAY to hike the Inca Trail, Machu Picchu, or the Sacred Valley, make a stop-over at the ALBERGUE in Ollantay-tambo, Cusco, Peru. A delightful, relaxing, family, farm-house. $10p/n, meals available. Can make your reservations in Cusco.Tel: 233350/235674, FAX 238911. (UL)

EXPLORER'S INN. World records: 573 species birds, 1,150 butterflies, 103 dragonflies. In the Tambopata Nature Reserve, Puerto Maldonado. For reservations and information contact Peruvian Safaris, Garcilaso de la Vega 1334, Lima. Tel: 31-6330. Fax: 051-14-328866. (UL)

EDWARDS INN—Excellent location in Huaraz for a pleasant stay: panoramic view, double/multiple rooms, double beds, continuous hot water, private/shared bath, climbing/hiking information. Av. Bolognesi #121, Huaraz, Ancash, Peru. Tel: 722692. (UL)

LA CASA de ELIZA—Isabel la Católica 1559 (La Floresta), Quito, Ecuador. Tel: 593-2-226602. For only US$6 a night, a friendly place to stay in Quito. Kitchen and laundry facilities. The owner, Eliza Manteca, is a devoted environmentalist and initiated the development of the Cerro Golondrinas Cloudforest Reserve. See also Trips. (49)

WHEN IN SANTIAGO, CHILE, stay at my house; US$8 per night. CASAPAXI, Llico 968. Pieter Van Bunningen, Tel: 5229947. One block east off METRO Departamental. (UL)

COSY APARTMENTS in a private house. Family atmosphere, comfortable, safe, nice and quiet location. Very friendly, English-speaking owner. Price from $15-$30 p/n per apartment. With cooking and laundry facilities. Please contact Jose Luis for reservations. Fr. de aula Ugarriza 727, Miraflores, Lima 18, Peru. Tel (51-14) 441015. Fax: (51-14) 467177. (UL)

MAISON IN LIMA. Your best option is Hostal La Posada del Parque with art deco bathrooms, hot water, clean and safe, from US$15 to US$30. Address: Parque Herman Velarde Number 28, Altura Cuadra, 1 and 2 Petit Thouars Avenue, Santa Beatriz, Lima. Reservations: (00511) 433-2412. Fax (00511) 432-3011. (49)

ECUADOR'S FIRST BED AND BREAKFAST welcomes you. Casa Nuhuazo in Baños, on the volcano Tungurahua, offers comfort, quietness, a friendly atmosphere, and personal attention. Weekly and monthly rates available. Via El Salado, Tel: 5933-740-315. E-mail: nuhuazo@ibm.net (49)

ESMERALDAS, relax in the Swiss-run hosteria "Pura Vida," Rio Verde. Beautiful beach front, excellent seafood, games, excursions, fishing, etc. Rooms and cabins $5-10 pp. 10% SAEC discount. Tel (5939) 455-337 (50).

LANGUAGE

SPANISH FOR TRAVELERS. Practical, intensive Spanish course for 1 or 4 weeks in Huancayo, Peru. Individual or small groups; start when you get there. Includes food and lodging with Indian families. Weaving and pan-flute lessons can be arranged. Contact Beverly Stuart de Hurtado, Apartado Postal 510, Huancayo, Peru. Tel: (064) 237063 or 222395. (49)

STUDY IN THE HEART OF THE ANDES Homestay/individualized Spanish classes in Quito or Ibarra, Ecuador. Classes planned for your interst by certified teacher; all levels. Nancy Grona, P. O. Box 100, Manchaca TX 78652; 512-282-1987 (49)

EXPERIENCIA: Spanish in Cuernavaca, Mexico, group and individual classes, home stay programs. Online at www.weblane.com/experiencia/. E-mail: experiencia@weblane.com. U.S. phone: (512) 331-5925.

YOUR BEST LINK TO SPANISH SCHOOLS

in Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, Mexico & Costa Rica. Super personal service. Language Link, Tel: (800) 552-2051, Fax: (309) 69202926, E-mail: info@langlink.com, WWW—http://www.langlink.com. (49)

SPANISH LESSONS IN LIMA, PERU at $5(US) an hour. Also, if you need a Spanish-speaking person, leave your name and phone number at 42-6918 and I will call you back. (UL)

OPPORTUNITIES

FOR SALE: The Magic Bean, one of Quito's most popular restaurants/hostels (see Let's Go '97, S.A. Handbook '97 etc.) Great location, American-owned, must-sell. Payment plan possible. For details: Bill Ward (615) 662-6923, 2023 Old Natchez Trace, Franklin, TN 37064, email: billward@voyageronline.net (49)

CAPITAL AVAILABLE. Investment banker with NYSE Member firm seeks to invest in a company already established and growing in ecotravel. Strong interest in Ecuador, Costa Rica and Guatemala. Ideal candidate has a need for growth capital and a sucessful track record. C. William Dedmon, 4535 Manning Lane, Dallas, TX 75220. (49)

LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON(S) to help develop some unique exploring and travel within Chile, starting at the Bio-Bio province. Phone/fax: (909) 766-0874. (49)

FOR SALE. Hotel, restaurant and apartment in center of Lima. Ground Floor area 330 sq. m. Information: Tel/fax: c/o SAEC (511) 425-0142, Attention: Henri. (49)

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POSITIONS SOUGHT

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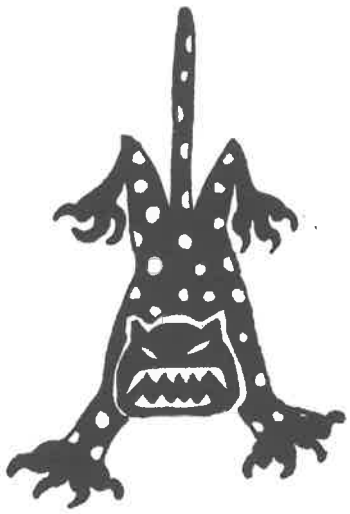

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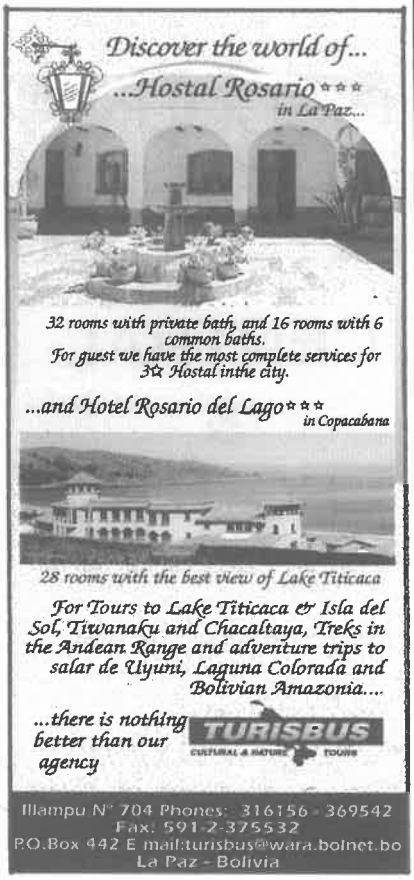
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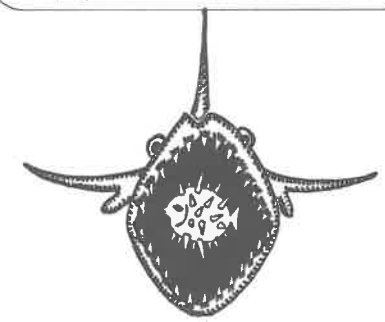

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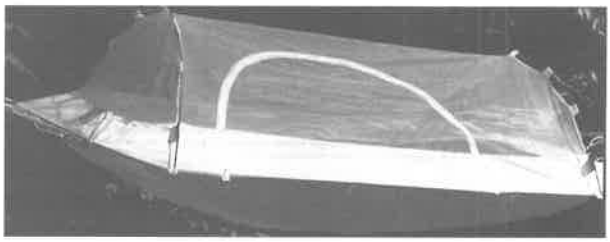

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Ithaca Club News

Join the Tour That Promises More

Theme tours are in.

Planning your next vacation? Beach, mountains, jungle...all passé. These days, you have to have a guiding principle, a motif, a meaning—in short, a *theme*.

Like what?

Painting, for instance. Travel Europe in the creative company of other artists, stopping here, stopping there, to whip off an ephemeral little watercolor of an ancient mill, the happy peasantry at harvest, the stark beauty of a pastoral hayrick. Not into painting? No matter. Castles, maybe? Take the Rhine castle tour where, for a $180 a day, you don armor, mount your steed, choose your weapon (longbow, lance, mace, crossbow, broadsword, or pike) and rattle out for some authentic medieval combat. Not your style? Not to worry, there's more. Maybe winetasting. Amble through ancient vineyards with your fellow wine connoisseurs, tripping amongst the grape-heavy vines from winery to winery, quaffing the elixir of the sun-drenched uva, thumping casks, weighing the subtle merits of the vintage, savoring the ethereal fragrance and the boldness of the body. Still no go? Something more hands-on then. Why not a photography safari? Team up with visually discerning shutterbugs to capture the spirit of nature in action shots of wild animals. Frame artistic street compositions, arrange still-lifes, or pose languid nudes in spartan studios while swapping tips on shutter speeds and *chiaroscuro*.

All this theme stuff works just as well in South America, too. Maybe even better. See the Che Guevara Route in Tips and Notes, page 42.

And just so you know, Members, since theme tours are hot, the Club is thinking of launching its own line. Why, in a couple of years, we could be raking in dough with our popular Conquistador Sack-n-Rack Tour. Still in the planning stage, this twelve-day economy package starts off with the cry of "Land ho!" from on high in the crow's nest. On shore, hooting, spear-waving natives jump up and down at the launch of the longboats. Upon landing, you and your swaggering conquistadors plant the flag of civilization while receiving the first obeisances from the kneeling, loin-clothed horde. A 15-minute photo shoot is scheduled before the feast of roasted peccary and the ever-popular conversion ceremony. Over the following days, tension mounts, turns to violence, and escalates, forcing you and your fellow marauding Spaniards to whip the rebellious savages into line. Need we say, the tour ends with the brutal garrotting of the meek Atahuallpa, followed by a ceremonial shower of gold?

And why stop there? Themes abound. Ever wanted to make First Contact? Why not? On our First Contact Tour, you and your intrepid band of explorers machete your way through the green hell to the village of the undiscovered heathen Pichatotti, a stone-age tribe. Presenting gifts (some beads, an axe, and some Fruit Roll-ups) you win them over, teaching them about fire and the wheel, while turning them into docile followers who, in a burst of gratitude, hoist you upon their naked shoulders and carry you off to a gilded throne. You get the picture.

What about Darwin? Good question. On our Darwin Tour, you get in touch with your evolutionary roots. Better yet, you get to prove that survival of the fittest really works. How? A less-fit species tries to take over your territory and you exterminate them. People who have field-tested this tour claim to feel decidedly better about themselves by the end of the tour and don't question their right to exist.

Then there's our Jane Goodall Tour. The tour starts with our South American Jane helping you to select a monkey suit in your size. Then for the next five days, you **go ape**. Believe it! With your fellow simians, you shuffle about, engaging in all sorts of monkey business (ha, ha), uninhibited primate behavior such as nitpicking, teeth-bearing and other aggressive display, territorial defense, and of course, mating indiscriminately while a dead-ringer for Ms. Goodall squats in the bush and records your antics for science.

Tired of listening to some shaman drone on while you get blitzed on *ayahuasca*? Well, it's your turn now. On the Club's High on the Vine Shaman Tour, you sashay around in a robe, blow smoke, and heal. This time around *you* get to interpret the significance of the collective vision.

The Amazon Tour speaks for itself. Essentially, you gallop out with your sisters and shoot arrows at small white intruders.

There's more, of course. Still on the drawing board are possible Orellana, Col. Fawcett, Jimmy Angel, Evita, and Hiram Bingham tours.

So, Members, it's up to you how far we go with this, but we're ready to rumble. On the other hand, what with costumes, weapons, staff, extras, props, and special effects, it's going to cost a bundle.

Fortunately, we're in no hurry, thanks to the generosity to those special Contributing, Supporting, Life, and Afterlife Members who have commendably and magnanimously given that not-so-little extra to keep the club afloat.

CONTRIBUTING
Rosemary Ames
Michael Baldwin
Victor Balon
Gary Barker

Amanda & Roy Bingham
Sadie Brorson
Takis Dimitriu
Paul Douglas
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Daniel E. Fox
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Lima Club News

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Chris Cochran, the former Manager of the Lima clubhouse. Chris was a wonderful part of the Club and will be remembered always for his intelligence, kindness, adventurous spirit, and zest for life. His many friends in Lima gathered for a memorial *misa* on June 7th. A fund has been created by the Club and Mr. and Mrs. Cochran to commemorate Chris and his love of mountain climbing. Please contact the Ithaca Clubhouse to make a donation in Chris's memory.

Lima was back on the front-pages of newspapers around the world again on April 22nd, when the Peruvian government "rescued" the hostages by storming the Japanese embassy and killing all the young Tupac Armaru rebels. Was all the bloodshed necessary? Questions linger. Even some of the former hostages have expressed regrets over the killings. Nonetheless, the end of the crisis has brought with it a general feeling of relief in Peru and reassurance that terrorism is not likely to overwhelm their country again. Life in the capital city has returned to normal but seems to have dampened the tourist trade. Fewer people have been visiting the Clubhouse than in past years, though this is the height of the traditional high season for travel.

Volunteers Katherine Dunphy and Emily Markes have taken over for Sara Press, Shandi Harkness, and Elizabeth Austin, whose work during temporary stints in the Lima Clubhouse are much appreciated. Fortunately both Katherine and Emily received thorough training thanks to the aforementioned and are holding down the fort with the help of Ofelia who's been with the Clubhouse for ten (10!) years now. Ofelia is learning about computers and will soon be quite the wiz.

Most our time recently has been taken up with organizing the library, bodega, and stockroom. We've also cleaned up the place, put new locks on windows and doors, and are pondering starting up a lecture series. Quito is already holding lectures, but we intend to catch up. Anyone interested in presenting spellbinding, gripping talks of consummate Member interest should contact us immediately. On another matter, we have been encouraging Members to clean up the trails in the Cordillera Blanca and Cusco area. We hope this will take off and blossom into a full-fledged, regular clean-up activity. Responding to Member wishes, we've also put together an information packet about volunteer opportunities in South America. This is an area of increasing Member interest, and we happy to help.

The Lima fog has rolled in later than usual this year. The sun and heat persisted all the way into June due to changes in El Niño. This shift in the current affected rainfall, causing water shortages throughout Peru—a worry for many Peruvians.

Cultural events in Lima of note: An exhibition of Goya art is on display at the Museo del Arte and will last through most of the summer. The Instituto Cultural Peruano-Norteamericano hosted an International Dance Festival throughout the month of May, featuring dance troupes from Brazil, Peru, New York, Uruguay, and Spain. Our beloved district of Breña hosted the world-renowned Bolivian folk ensemble, Kjarkas, in the immense Coliseo Amauta located close to the Clubhouse. The city of Lima proudly "unveiled" the newly renovated Plaza San Martin in el centro, celebrating the official opening with a grand fireworks display. The spanking new Plaza San Martin is quite an improvement, further proof that the city is committed to beautifying the downtown area.

And what are our Members up to these days? Lizette van Bergen and Martyn van Keulen from the Netherlands hitched up with a camera crew on an expedition to Laguna de los Condones near Chachapoyas, the site of a recent discovery of mummies and pottery possibly dating back to the 13th century. They were the fifth group to visit the area since this amazing discovery. Lizette and Martyn are even featured in a Peruvian documentary filmed by the camera crew. Mary Leonardi stopped over in Lima while following Che Guevara's route through Latin America as described in his diary. Watson fellow Marisa Castuela is interviewing in Lima for a study of young Japanese-Peruvians. Rick Vecchio is teaching English and journalism at the university in Ayacucho. Chris and Natalie Synder have biked all the way from Vancouver, CA and will bike around South America for another year or so. Trista Gage and Allen Rindfuss have been volunteering in different areas around Peru and Bolivia; they have provided us with a great amount of information to include in our volunteer packet. Chris Benway with brother Zack hope to have Cafe Andino in Huaraz up and serving coffee before the busy trekking season ends in September.

Despite the slump, we hope that things will pick up soon and that more SAEC members will be able to take advantage of the beautiful weather in the highlands at this time of year to climb, trek, white water raft, study, and explore!

Quito Club News

We were very saddened to hear the news of Chris' death. As travelers and explorers, we all realize that our lives are in the hands of fate. It helps to remember that Chris lived a very full life and was doing things that he enjoyed. We will miss him greatly, but his contribution to the Club and his memory will always remain. We would like to extend our sympathy and support to his family.

On May 25th, Ecuadorians voted on a 14 point government referendum. The first two were related to the Congressional resolution removing Abdalá

Bucaram from office and instating Fabian Alarcón as President. The other twelve dealt with changes to the constitution. The wording was phrased in technical, legal language incomprehensible to the majority of the population. The result is that Alarcón will remain in office until August 1998. This, international investors believe, will contribute to political and economic stability.

A series of Club-sponsored hikes was launched in earnest this spring. So far, seven one-day hikes to active volcanoes, hot thermal springs, and nature reserves have taken place without one single fatality (except, perhaps, one horse).

After about six "easy" hikes, we felt it time to pose a greater challenge to Members. So, on the weekend of May 24th and 25th, after a hearty breakfast, the first-ever Club expedition to Illiniza Norte left Quito. Near the base of the mountain, the expedition members mounted horses, and after a long, hard day, twelve saddle-sore gringos reached the refuge at 4650m.

Up at 3:30 sharp the next morning, they ate breakfast by candlelight, and headed off up the mountain under the stars and full moon. The sun rose over Cotopaxi revealing breathtaking views of Chimborazo and the surrounding countryside as nine more South American explorers joined the ranks of the Five-Thousand Meter Club. After commemorating the event with a photo session on the summit, the expedition headed down the mountain for lunch. The trip ended with a four-hour hike down and a rooftop bus ride back to Quito.

Other Club outings included trips to Pasochoa, Ilaló, El Chaupi, Gua Gua Pichincha, Pululahua, and Papallacta Hot Springs. On average, twenty members came along on each trip.

On May 29th, the Quito Club convened its second semi-annual General Assembly meeting. Member attendance was lower than hoped, but the session produced many excellent and exciting proposals. We have started work on several new projects already.

On April 17th, members gathered to view Andy Drumm's film "Trinkets and Beads." Of Welsh origin, Andy lives in Ecuador and works with the Huaoranis promoting ecotourism. His film chronicles the impact of missionaries and oil companies on indigenous peoples in the Amazon. This very powerful film was followed by a discussion about one indigenous group's lawsuit against Texaco.

On June 5th, Chris Canaday talked about his efforts to reintroduce native vegetation to Parque Metro-politano in Quito. On the Saturday following the presentation, Club volunteers planted trees in the park.

On June 12, Miles Orkin gave members advice on how to protect themselves against street crime.

Since December, we have been working on a project to implement an indexing system to make locating and filing trip reports much more "user-friendly." The project is almost finished—to see the results, look for the black binders!

Busy season has kept us...well ...busy. Fortunately, the long-term volunteers helped us complete many projects before the wave of summer tourists rolled in. We will greatly miss the energy and good work of Damaris, Diego, Sasha, Sean and Kris, and wish them well until they return (hint, hint!). We welcome Maya and Simeon from Canada who, we are pleased to announce, have committed to working at the Club for at least a year.

The next Quito General Assembly meeting will take place in November. Check the Clubhouse for details. Bring your ideas and suggestions! All members are welcome.

Club Wish List

Sure, we can live without all this stuff we're asking for, but since we know the Membership is out there sitting on needed equipment and supplies...well, we thought we'd just go ahead and ask.

So what do we want? Well for starters, a **3-line phone system**, the very one you ripped out to install your new high-tech 4 or 5-line integrated phone system with voice mail and cordless princess phones in designer colors. We need it. It's probably stuffed in some box in your cellar en route to the Salvation Army. Get it and ship it to us post haste or resign yourself to getting busy signals when you call us, a situation which could persist well into the next millenium unless something's done. Incidentally, *new* merchandise will also be graciously accepted.

You don't have a 3-line phone system? Forget it. How about the **alarm system** the Quito Clubhouse desperately wants. What sort of system? Well, we're not quite sure. Maybe something that tracks the intruder on a video camera, drops goodies to lure him/her into a wire cage, zaps him with 2000V DC, and delivers a stern lecture in Spanish, English, or Quechua. Or, perhaps something more modest. Actually, any system will do.

Quito also covets a **SVGA color computer monitor**, preferably with late-model 386 or above computer attached. The monitor is the key thing, however. What else? Maybe a swatch of **large 3-ring binders** to hold letter-size paper. Any amount of these would produce effusions of gratitude from our southern sisters and brothers if we don't divert them to higher purposes in transit through Ithaca.

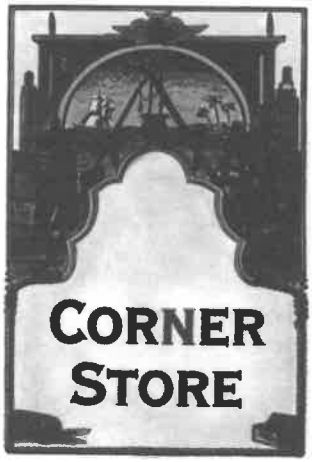
Please note: All gifts are tax-deductible. Indicate the value of your gift, choosing an amount that won't elicit guffaws of mirth from the IRS, and we will promptly remit a receipt for that amount which you can use for your tax records.

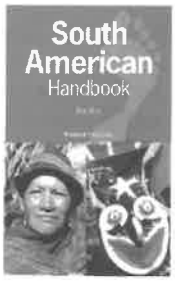
Remember: Each item donated will bear a little tag advising all who see it that this is the Geraldine R. Merkle 3-Phone System or the Henry J. Midden Burgler Detector and Alarm. Have trouble being remembered? Here's how.

Petra Schepens, star Lima Club manager 1989–1994, writes:

"...Things change here in little Holland as well, especially for me--I am pregnant! Thought this would never happen to me, but I did find a little Dutchman who could stand my way of living, in fact, he has the same ideas so we can handle it. And now, we are enjoying the ideas that there will be a little mixer of the both of us, running around this world soon (end of September). Can you imagine! Sometimes I find it hard to believe. So we are looking for a little place to live for a while (at least a year), so I get the rest to prepare for the coming of Shen (that's how we call the baby). I will finish school by the end of May, but John still has one year to go. We are both studying massage therapy ...Petra"

To order any of the titles on these pages, use our order form on page 63. The South American Explorers Club also sells a host of other excellent guidebooks and maps of South and Central America, cassettes and CDs of Latin American music, and some nifty t-shirts. To request a free catalog: call (800) 274–0568 9A.M.–5P.M. EST, fax your request to (607) 277–6122, e-mail us at explorer@samexplo.org, or take a look at our catalog on-line at http://www.samexplo.org.

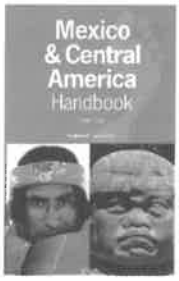




South American Handbook 1997

Ben Box

The legendary *South American Handbook* is known quite simply as the bible to South American travelers. Now totally redesigned, this is the 73rd consecutive edition of the *SAH*. In 1680 pages, the *SAH* once again offers comprehensive listings of foreign embassies, language schools, travel agents, info on crossing borders and much more. Updated and revised every year, the *SAH* is far and away the most comprehensive source of information for the serious traveler. As before, it remains the single best navigational chart to the South American continent. See book review, *SAE* Issue #47.
$40.00 [Members $35.00] Item #257



Mexico and Central America Handbook 1997

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The *Mexico and Central America Handbook 1997* provides comprehensive coverage on everything you need to know about the countries between the Rio Grande and the Darién Gap. A gold-mine of facts, up-to-date information, the *MCAH* is packed with money-saving hints and 115 detailed maps. Written by people who know the region inside out, this is the best and most complete book on the territory available.
$22.00 [Members $20.00] Item #258

Chile Handbook 1997

Charlie Nurse and Ben Box

At long last, the Chile Handbook is out with all sorts of new features, suggested itineraries, notes on adventure tourism, climbing, trekking, skiing, canyoning, kayaking, and more. An excellent source book with valuable information for getting around, when to go, staying healthy, altitude, climate, and much, much more.
$16.95 [Members $15.95] Item #259

Peru Handbook

Alan Murphy

The *Peru Handbook* follows in the tradition of the *SAH*. Packed with practical travel information, maps, history, tips on health, personal security, places to stay, restaurants, the *Peru Handbook* provides a wealth of information on national parks, archaeological sites, recreational sports such as white water rafting, hiking and mountaineering and much more. This is a guidebook on Peru second to none, a remarkable achievement and a must for the Peru traveler.
$16.95 [Member $15.95] Item #126

Ecuador and Galapagos Handbook

Alan Murphy

The *Ecuador and Galapagos Handbook* is filled with maps and facts on climate, history, places of interest, churches, museums, excursions, hot springs, and more. Following the proud tradition of the *South American Handbook,* this is one of the first in a series of guides to the individual countries of South America. Up-to-date and reliable information.
$16.95 [Member $15.95] Item #171

A Traveler's Guide to the Galapagos Islands

Barry Boyce

"No man is an island..." and it's a good thing, too, because for what its going to cost, you don't want to get there and find it's some man. Looking forward

to being one of the 40,000 people to visit the Galapagos this year? Then invest in this book that lets you sort out the various boats, what they charge, what they offer, speciality tours (photography, bird watching, diving, etc.) and how to make your reservation.
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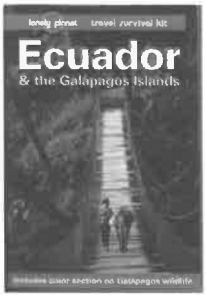

Ecuador & the Galápagos Islands: A Travel Survival Kit

Rob Rachowiecki, Lonely Planet

Ecuador is frequently described as South America in miniature with beaches, offshore islands, mountains, jungle, 18th-century colonial villages, markets, etc. It helps that Ecuador is about the least expensive country in South America, too. This practical guide features 55 detailed maps, recommendations for every budget, extensive accommodation info, and details on conservation issues, eco-tourism, national parks and reserves. Brand new edition.
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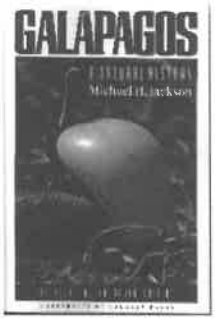

Galápagos A Natural History Guide

M.H. Jackson

A comprehensive guide to the natural history of the islands - the human history, physical environment, evolutionary and ecological relationships, and detailed histories of the flora and fauna. Without doubt, the best natural history guide to the islands available. Big paperback; photos, maps, large bibliography.
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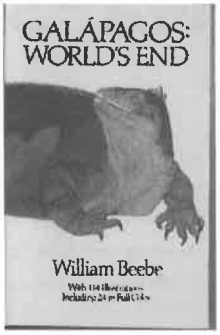

Galápagos: World's End

William Beebe

Here is a splendid book of the 1923 expedition by the great naturalist himself, full of science, history, romance, adventure and an "unparalleled accumulation of facts." 114 illustrations, full-color. You'll be better informed for having read this book.
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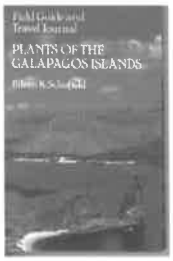

Plants of the Galápagos Islands

Eileen Schofield

This little guide is about Galápagos flora. Everything you might want to know about the Prickly Pear, the Desert Plum, the Cut-Leaf Daisy, the Glory Bower, Darwin's Aster, and much more.
$11.95 [Members $10.95] Item #150

Ecuador Insight Guide

A hefty well-written and lavishly illustrated guide with color photographs and fact-filled accounts written by a team of veteran journalists and travel writers. All in all, one of the best of the generally excellent Insight Guides.
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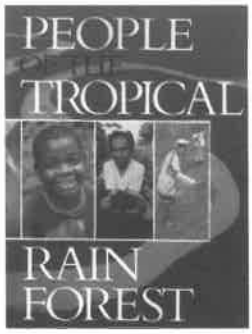

People of the Tropical Rain Forest

Edited by Julie Sloan Denslow & Christine Padoch

This book is so good we refuse to generate a lot of hype to persuade you to acquire a copy. Just send the money. A collection of the most authoritative and readable writings about the jungle by such noted experts as Betty Meggers, Robert Carneiro, and Darrell Posey with beautiful pictures and illustrations published by the University of California Press in association with the Smithsonian Institution.
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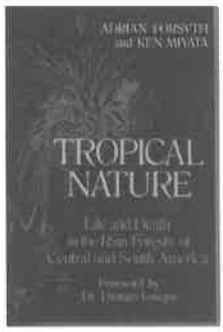

Tropical Nature

Adrian Forsyth and Ken Miyata

In our not so humble opinion, this is quite possibly the best field guide to the extraordinary richness of the tropical rainforest. It combines shrewd scientific observation with solid natural history. A book of grace and humor. No better introduction to tropical biology. A favorite of Club members for the last 10 years.
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Guide to Rio (Map, tourist info)	9.00	8.00	#488
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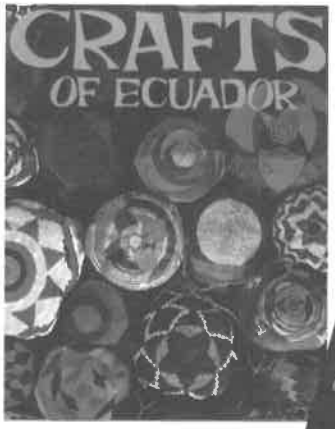

Crafts of Ecuador is a stunning book—184 pages with color photographs of Ecuador's wondrous crafts—textiles, weaving, embroidery, hatmaking, metalwork, leather-tooling, ceramics, candle-making, bread dough ornaments, wood, tagua, bone, and stone carving, painting, and more. A breath-taking tour-de-force with historical notes, profiles of artisans, and descriptions of techniques. A steal at twice the price and worth every *sucre*.

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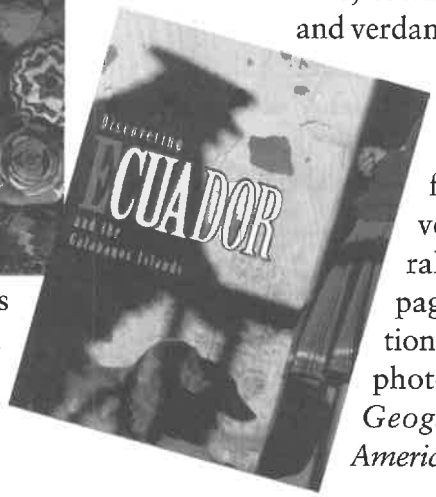

Discovering Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands is a pictorial odyssey. Travel with 38 top-notch photographers on a journey through Ecuador's cities, towns, villages, countryside, and verdant rainforest. These magnificent color photographs capture the beauty of Andean life, festivals, snow-capped volcanoes, and the natural wonders of the Galápagos. Brilliant introduction by Loren McIntyre, ace photographer for *National Geogaphic* and the *South American Explorer*.

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